

文句の  
付けようがない  
ラブコメ  
Never Ending Story

鈴木大輔

Daisuke Suzuki

illust 肋兵器



# **Monku no Tsukeyou ga Nai Rabukome**

– Never Ending Story –

**- Volume 1 -**

**-Author-**

**Daisuke Suzuki**

**-Artist-**

**Heiki Abara**

**[ Gakusei Translations ]**

## - STORY -

Kanaruzawa Sekai, “The God Who Lived A Thousand Years”, is a beautiful girl with silver hair and red eyes. She’s pompous and does not know much about her surroundings. And despite her childish appearance, she can tolerate alcohol and tobacco, and spends her days in her mansion reading books.

Offered to her as a “living sacrifice” is high school student Kirishima Yuuki. As he was told she’d grant him one thing in exchange of being the sacrifice, Kirishima said: “Kanaruzawa Sekai-san, marry me.”

And so, they start to live their life together – but their days without peace nor love became disrupted, as the world began to be disordered due to a terrifying secret concerning the whole world.

A comedically pure love, and a never-ending story begins here!

# 文句の付けようがないラブコメ

鈴木大輔

illust 肋兵器





「酒も煙草も大好きって、なんかちょっと斬新だなあ……」

「？ 斬新とはどういうことなのだ？」

「いやまあ。なんとなく」

「よいではないか。別に誰にも迷惑はかけておらぬ」

「そりやそうだけども」

「加えてわたしは貴殿とちがって  
未成年ではない」

「……」

# Prologue

序章



“Nice to meet you. I am a god,” the girl said while holding a cigar.

She kept her eyes on the book on her lap, not looking at Kirishima Yuuki even once.

“My name is Kanaruzawa Sekai.” The girl blows out a puff of smoke while turning the page of the book, “As you know, you belong to me as of today.”

She was a beautiful girl. Beautiful beyond belief. With silver hair and red eyes, she had an otherworldly aura about her. This was Kirishima Yuuki’s “God”. She, alone, is the otherworldly existence that has and will continue to protect the world for thousands of years to come. Kirishima Yuuki is now the sacrifice that is being given to her.

“If you don’t like it, you can try to escape. You may even decide to take your own life.” The girl smiled coldly, “However, do not forget. You are the ninth generation of your family. You have been chosen by the Tsukumo Organization to become the *sacrifice*.”

Biyuu, a gust of wind shook the window. Outside, the first of the early snow in Tokyo is dancing in the sky. The snow falling constantly from the grey sky, creating a winter landscape around the god’s mansion.

“Now, onto the main topic.” The girl lifted her face. Her shining red eyes looking straight at Yuuki, “As a sacrifice, you get something in return. I will grant one – and only one wish. Whether it is money, women, or power, I will grant it. The only thing I cannot give is your freedom.”

Holding her cheeks with her hands, the girl narrows her eyes. Cold, her gaze was cold. It felt as if she were staring into the depths of your heart.

“...Then...”

Yuuki said something for the first time. The girl raised her eyebrows and let out a sound, “Oh?” The boy was in his mid-teens and had a slightly higher pitched voice, making it loud and clear like that of an actor on stage. Yet, he seemed calm for someone who was standing in front of a being that lived for so much longer than a normal human.

“Getting straight to the point, could I tell you my wish now?”

“Of course.”

Ever so slightly, the girl leaned forward. The action showed her interest in what was about to come.

“Whatever you say, I will grant it to you.”

“Then,” Kohon, he coughed. Then, Ah~ Ah~ Ah~, he made sure his throat was in good condition to speak. After pulling on his sleeves and straightening his collar, he then spoke, “Kanaruzawa Sekai-san, please marry me.”

“...”

It looked like time had stopped for the girl. Pokan, she blushed and her mouth opened with her eyes unblinking as if she forgot how to breathe. On the other side of things, Yuuki’s expression didn’t change, his eyes were also not blinking, but he was breathing regularly. He was just waiting patiently for a reply.

The wood in the fireplace made a loud pop. Some ash fell from her cigar. Kata kata~, the outside wind and snow rattled the glass windows.

“Y...”

No one knows how much time passed like this. However, at some point, the girl looked down at her knees, cheeks blushing, and held her two hands together.

“Yes! I will be in your care,” she said.

†

Now, let the love comedy begin.

A romance comedy between him and her that no one can complain about. <sup>[1]</sup>

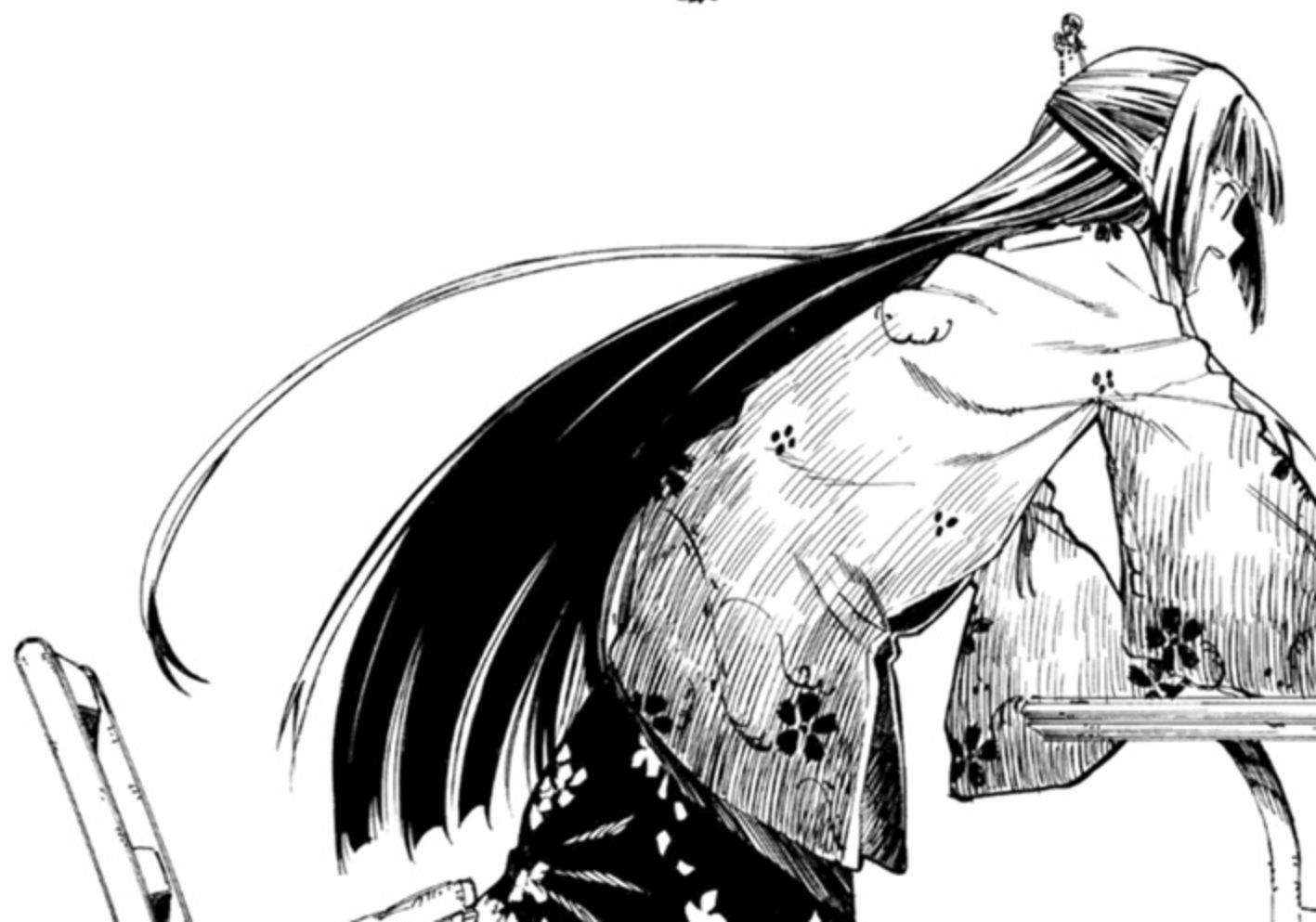
---

### TL Note:

1. The title of the light novel basically.

# Chapter 1

第一章



This is something that happened a while back.

“Onii-sama, Onii-sama. Do you want to do a quiz?”

“Quiz?”

“Yes. A quiz to break the weird atmosphere between us siblings. It’ll be a fun and easy quiz,”

It was a few months ago. Kirishima Yuuki remembered that at the time, he was talking with his sister in his parent’s garden.

“That’s fine, but what do you mean by weird atmosphere? Isn’t this how it normally is between us?”

“Question number one!” She ignored him and continued with the question, “What is the one thing in the world that a girl wants the most?”

“What...?”

“What is it?”

“...”

“What iiiissss iiitttt?”

His sister was forceful like she usually was.

Avoiding her gaze, Yuuki stroked his chin, “Hmm... I wonder. Were the topics of quiz questions always so broad...?”

“Well, well, what is it ~? What is the answer ~?”

She sung a strange tune, while dancing, urging Yuuki on. Yuuki gave up as he sighed on the inside. Every once in a while, I should play along with my sister’s teasing.

“Then, eating sweet things?”

“Bu bu ~. That is incorrect.”

“Wearing cute and fashionable clothes.”

“Bu bu ~. That is incorrect.”

“To be given a lot of compliments.”

“Bu bu ~. That is incorrect.”

“...Ugh, isn’t this question impossible? More importantly, isn’t the question phrased weirdly?”

“By the way, if you answer one more time incorrectly, I’ll have you give me a hug while I sit on your lap as punishment~”

“Why? I don’t want to.”

“Ten seconds left. Nine. Eight. Seven...”

A merciless countdown began. While being amazed, Yuuki continued to think. What type of answer would she want? Maybe—

“Then... a kiss from the person they like? Maybe?”

“So close!” She holds her head and bends over, seemingly in pain, “Oh so very close! Very much a ‘near pin’ I would say! The difference between Onii-sama’s answer and the correct answer is like the difference between ordinary rice and sticky rice! Man~ you really are so close!”

“If it’s really that close then just give it to me.”

“Nope. This time a ‘hanamaru’<sup>[1]</sup> isn’t enough. This time, unless your answer is exactly correct, I won’t forgive you.” It suddenly became a question of whether or not she would forgive him. While groaning, Yuuki twists his neck in confusion, but then, “Bu bu~! Too bad, you’re out of time! Now, let me sit on your lap and give me a hug at once.”

“Wait. At least tell me the right answer. Otherwise, I can’t accept this.”

“It’s bad to be a sore loser, Onii-sama. Since when did you decide that you would be giving me a hug, patting me on the head, and kissing me on the cheek.”

“Stop increasing your demands so suddenly. Now, tell me quickly.”

“Fumun. It can’t be helped.” The sister flares out her nose, “The right answer is... jyajyajyan~! ‘A proposal from the person they like’ dondon pafupafu~!”

“I see...”

“For heaven’s sake Onii-sama is a blockhead isn’t he? It makes me sad as your little sister that you can’t answer this easy question correctly. The one dream that a girl has, the one eternal longing is to be proposed to by a wonderful prince. Isn’t that obvious.”  
(Sister)

“...”

“Because you are like this, you are still far from getting a girlfriend or a lover of any kind. Well, I intend to look after Onii-sama for the rest of your life so that is no problem. Why did you stand up from your seat!? Where are you going!? I haven’t finished talking yet!”

...Of course, Yuuki still appreciates his sister. If it wasn’t for the liveliness and brightness of his sister, Kirishima Yuuki’s life would have been much darker. His role as an offering was already decided before he was born, and for over ten years now, he has been thinking about what that actually meant. If there was a reason he recalled this moment at this time, it was probably because the answer to his sister’s mysterious quiz seemed to fit the current situation perfectly.

†

“...So that’s why you asked my Mistress to marry you?”

Her smile that didn’t even move one millimeter was scary.

It was someplace in the 24 wards of Tokyo, inside the drawing room outside of a certain god’s bedroom. There, the maid in front of me who takes care of the entire mansion, was preaching to Yuuki with an unchanging expression.

“Yeah... well...” Yuuki nods with cold sweat, “Of course, that is not the only reason.”

“If that isn’t all, what other reasons are there?”

“In other words...” Yuuki chose his words carefully, “I guess it was somewhat on a whim.”

“On a whim?”

“To be honest, I was feeling very nervous coming here today. For ten years now, I have known that I was going to be sacrificed, but I was given almost no information on whom I was going to be sacrificed to, you see.”

“I accept that that point is our fault.” Maid-san nodded, “It is true that I did not give you any information about my Mistress and invited you without prior notice while telling you to ‘fulfill your duty’ immediately. It is not hard to imagine the burden placed on you for following the rules that the Tsukumo Organization has set for so many years.”

“Yeah, right?”

“Considering that burden, it is understandable that you would take such a strange, thoughtless, and impulsive action.”

“I know right. I don’t know about the rules, but I would’ve wished for you to let me know a little more in advance in one way or another.”

With that said, Yuuki knew that he was forcefully trying to make excuses for himself. No matter how much of a whim it was, no one would ask a person they met for the first time for their hand in marriage. Even saying that it was due to her sister’s from earlier saying, “a proposal from the person they like”, was just another excuse.

“Then...” Well, what is done is done, Yuuki decided to move on, “Moving on to the next topic. It was wrong to ask for a proposal, wasn’t it? I probably should have thought of something better to ask for? Regarding the ‘wish’ that is.”

“No.” The maid shakes her head, “In return for giving up your freedom, you are given the right to ask for one wish. There is no need to take back your previous one. Technically speaking, you aren’t even allowed to.”

“What do you mean by that?”

“Once you have said your wish you cannot take it back. Well, aren’t you a fine young man? A man would not take back his words, right? I wish my Mistress and you a long-

lasting happiness.”

Maid-san smiled widely. Yuuki smiled back. Nono, Really? Are you kidding? Or so he thought, but it was not the mood where he could ask for a moment to think.

“Anyways...” He decided to change the topic, “To be honest, I am a little relieved.”

“Relieved? Why?”

“No, you see...” Again, choosing his words carefully, “Before I was brought here, I thought it was going to be harsher. I was told to ‘Give my life to god in order to protect the world’, other than that, I was given almost no other information. I thought it was going to be a more awful job.”

“An awful job, you say?”

“Yeah. Doesn’t it sound like you’re betting your life away? I imagined that it was going to be more violent, so I was prepared to be covered in blood while feeling a lot pain.”

“For us, you are a very important person.” Maid-san smiled, “Your safety is a priority for us. Even if you suddenly propose to my Mistress and she hides in her room as a result, we will not torture or kill you. Though I wish to.”

“ ... ”

He began to have cold sweat. Still, she doesn’t seem to be lying. For the moment, there is no need to wonder about living or dying, however, he’s still grateful for the safety that he has been given.

“It will be okay.” Maid-san glanced at the clock, “My Mistress should have reorganized herself by now. I leave the rest to you.”

“...you want me to go? Again?”

“Of course. Please don’t mess up this time. It’s your job now to keep my Mistress relaxed and her emotions calm.”

“Yeah, I understand. I will try my very best. However...”

“However?”

“It’s a little embarrassing, but I’m a little scared of her. I mean, didn’t I anger her earlier?”

“I don’t know. I can’t say for sure.”

“If she is really mad, will she kill me? She is a god after all.”

“You don’t need to worry about that.” Maid-san gave her seal of approval. The smile on her face was the biggest smile of the day, “You have already left the realm of humanity. As such, there is no such thing as death.”

†

...This interaction with the maid was one that happened a few minutes ago. Now, Kirishima Yuuki was standing in front of a door. He was standing in front of the room of the god called Kanaruzawa Sekai, where, just a few hours ago, he made a marriage proposal for the first time in his life. Considering what happened last time, it couldn’t be helped that he would hesitate before he moved to knock on the door.

(I know I did something wrong, but...) Yuuki thought, (I was forced into an unknown situation. Then shouldn’t it be normal for something weird to happen? I wasn’t that much in the wrong, right?)

Besides, he never really understood what was going on. The path that he was forced to followed was foretold ten years ago. It was decided that he was to be a sacrifice to god, an underling to god, a slave more than anything else. He felt that he had accepted this as his future and prepared accordingly.

However, reality was very different from what he expected. Because it was the room of the god that protects the world, he thought that he would be greeted inside a grand and magnificent castle. Instead, he was shown to a damp and old mansion somewhere inside a residential area in Tokyo. Yuuki wasn’t greeted by a line of spiritual beings like he expected, but by a single maid who did not seem that much older than him. Since it was a meeting with god, an unreal being, there should have been many procedural steps taken before the meeting. At the very least, an explanation should be given before the actual meeting itself.

In the end, it was all such a letdown. Yuuki felt that the disappointment, was definitely a reason that he acted so weirdly.

Probably.

(Well... it's all still a bunch of excuses.)

From the start, he never thought that his duty would be easy. Although he was forced into it, he decided to suck it up and move forward.

(What happens, happens!)

He took a deep breath.

He knocked on the door.

Then, he held his breath as he opened the door.

†

"Nice to meet you. I am a god," the girl said while holding a cigar.

She kept her eyes on the book on her lap, never looking at Kirishima Yuuki even once.

"My name is Kanaruzawa Sekai." The girl blows out a puff of smoke while turning the page of the book, "As you know, you belong to me as of today."

She was a beautiful girl. Beautiful beyond belief. With silver hair and red eyes, she had an otherworldly aura about her. This was Kirishima Yuuki's "God". She, alone, is the otherworldly existence that has and will continue to protect the world for thousands of years to come. Kirishima Yuuki is now the sacrifice that is being given to her.

"If you don't like it, you can try to escape. You may even decide to take your own life." The girl smiled coldly, "However, do not forget, that you are the ninth generation of your family. You have been chosen by the Tsukumo Organization to become—"

"...Nononono." Yuuki finally came back to reality, "Wait a moment. Wait."

He was shaking his head vigorously. While holding the bridge of his nose with his fingers, he said, "Eh, what? Is it just me? Or was that just a repeat of what happened earlier? Ummm, what is this?"

"..."

Sekai was shocked, her mouth open as if trying making out the last few sounds of her previous statement.

One second, two seconds... five seconds... ten seconds.

Within the silence, a strange atmosphere flowed. Sekai then coughed once and began to speak again.

“Nice to meet you. I am g—”

“I said that that’s enough already.”

Unintentionally, Yuuki made a retort. Mugu, the young girl held her mouth shut. An awkward silence comes between them again.

Tick, tock, tick, tock.

Inside, only the wall clock is echoed within the room. Even the slightest sound seemed to be sucked out by the snow outside the window.

Eh... what is with this situation? Yuuki thought. I was prepared to leave my fate up to change, but the current situation was unexpected. Something is seriously wrong with this situation. What should I do?

The silence continued.

As unbearable mood fills the air, he thought it would be better to think of the situation as one-time gag.

“...Uu”

The young girl let out a sound. Looking at her, it was still the face of the girl that was smoking the cigar earlier, but looking closely it has been dyed a bright red. That wasn’t all, she covered her face with the book on her lap and curled up like a small hamster or something like that.

“Umm...”

What is happening? Yuuki started to feel like he did something bad. Even so, when this happens to the person that he’s supposed to devote himself to, what is this situation?

More importantly, what's with her?

Is it that...

Is it because I wasn't following along as she tried to restart from when they first met? Is that why her face turned red?

"Ah... do you want to start over from when I come in and open the door again? Like redoing the challenge from the start again?"

"...It's alright." While covering her face, the young girl shakes her head. The awkward silence came back once more. Just as Yuuki was thinking about how to follow up, she spoke again.

"It's your fault." The young girl murmured, her eyes peeking out slightly above the book, "It wasn't supposed to be like this. Our first meeting was supposed to be more beautiful, cool. It would've been like a piece of art, where, after an elegant and brilliant exchange of words, you would sincerely express your respect for me, swear your life to me, and then we would both commemorate our first step together. And yet this happened."

"Haa, I see..."

Is that so? That's was what she was thinking about? Even though she's a god? Even though she's lived for a thousand years?

"I had been thinking about it for forever. The start of anything is important after all."

"You were thinking? About what...?"

"It's obvious. Our dialogue."

"Dia... Dialogue?"

"About how things were going to flow, about what we would say after you entered this room. I had simulated everything inside my head and was confident that I could handle anything that would happen."

Slowly, the young girl spoke. Yuuki listened with a blank expression, "According to my assumptions, you should've been more afraid, at least that's how it was supposed to

be. I am an existence equal to god, the one who should've had the initiative, the one who was supposed to control you. Despite that, despite all of that, you..."

"...Ummmm"

"It's your fault. Everything, all of it, is your fault."

"No, even if you put it that way..."

"It's your fault."

"..."

Yuuki became more and more frustrated. It wasn't enough for Yuuki to just shrug his shoulder at this point. The resentment that has continuously built up for the whole day, no, for the past ten or so years, caused Yuuki to open his mouth and speak.

"That's how you say it. However, didn't you have a lot to do with the current situation as well?"

"——!?"

The young girl showed a bewildered expression at the sudden change in Yuuki's tone. Ignoring it, Yuuki continued speaking,

"For me, I was brought here for a reason I didn't even understand, was forced to meet you for a reason that I didn't understand. Yet, you tell me with a condescending tone that 'It's all my fault', I can't accept that. Even if you're a god, that's just too high-handed."

"...Ye... ah"

"It's actually very bothersome. Besides, why was I brought here in the first place? I was told to become an offering, a sacrifice, what does that mean anyways? Who asked for this? Who decided this? Specifically, what am I supposed to be doing? If you don't even tell me, how am I supposed to know what to do. After all this, I was told that everything was my fault, and I was supposed to take responsibility, that's a joke right."

"...uu..."

“Actually, it didn’t just cause problems for me, even my family was bothered. Even now it’s at the point where they’ll only just barely be able manage somehow, just at the point before the family collapses. To be blunt, our family had collapsed at some point in the past. Destroyed in one fell swoop. Yeah, that’s the only way to put it.”

Yuuki stood up again. Then, as if everything was built up behind a dam, all of her emotions were let out in that one moment. Almost as if it was by reflex, she let out a cry. At first, there was just a small stream of tears, then, in the next moment,

“Uu... ahh... uaaaaah—”

She started crying. She’s a god that has lived for a thousand years. However, she started crying like a child.

“...eh? This can’t be real, right? Eh?”

“Uu... gusu... fueeeeeh...”

Yuuki started to panic. For a man, watching the figure of a crying girl was the worst feeling.

“So—hikku—rry...”

“It’s my fault. Actually, it’s a hundred percent my fault. You didn’t do anything wrong. That’s why, stop crying? Please?”

Yuuki didn’t know what to do. After a little hesitation, he pulled a handkerchief out of his pocket. The girl accepted the handkerchief carefully, as if caring for something precious, and wiped her tears. For Yuuki, he had already lost count of the amount of times that he has felt confused. What on earth is this situation? I really do not understand. Someone please help.

“Marriage...”

Suddenly, the girl spoke.

“Eh? What?”

“Please marry me, you said.” Her nose kept on running as she continued on, “Isn’t your treatment of me also a little too harsh? My situation was not that much different from

you. I was suddenly told a few days ago that someone was going to be brought here as an offering to me, so I was very confused. I was very very confused. Adding on to that, I haven't met a human from the outside world for a very long time, longer than I can remember."



“...Eh. Is that so?”

That’s the first time Yuuki heard about that. He had never even thought that before. Both Yuuki and her were placed in the same circumstances, and maybe they had even more in common.

“For a while now, I have been looking forward to meeting you. After all, I have always been alone.”

“ ... ”

“However, I am god, and you are an offering, that relationship cannot be called equal. But still, I wanted to get along with you. Yet, you exceeded my imagination. Really, suddenly asking me for marriage... what were you even thinking...”

“ ... ”

Yuuki thought, while he continued to watch as the god’s tears kept falling.

Yeah.

I get it now.

There was another reason he didn’t see any problem with proposing to a stranger. The reason was Kanaruzawa Sekai’s beauty. She isn’t of this world, that is something that a lot of people would probably say about her, he thought. In terms of looks, she wouldn’t lose to anyone in terms of beauty, those words would not be an exaggeration.

Large eyes.

Long eyelashes.

Pure white skin.

Dazzling silver hair that couldn’t be compared to wigs or dyed hair.

And, last but not least, her shining red eyes.

Yuuki didn’t want to believe that he was such a simple minded person. He wanted to use what her sister once said as an excuse, but none of that mattered in the end. One

look at her figure caused his heart to tighten, and next thing he knew, he was proposing to her, that was all.

—a little bit after that.

The young girl finally regains her composure,

“I do apologize. I couldn’t help myself.”

“No, it was my bad.”

The young girl gave a slight nod, as Yuuki lowered his head towards her. Just like before, both of them looked down, unwilling to have their eyes meet.

“...I” She raised her hand, during the heavy silence that dominated the situation. Then, as if she decided on something, she opened her mouth to speak, “I have something I want to ask you.”

“Something you want to ask?”

“Yeah. Something that I have to ask no matter what. It is something that I cannot let go no matter what.”

“Well then, I can’t do anything about it. I’ll answer if I can.”

“Y-yeah. I see,” Kohon kohon, she coughed to clear her throat. Kami-sama faced downwards and looked at Yuuki with upturned eyes, “You asked for marriage, and I accepted it. Of course, I did this because that was your wish as the offering and the wish of an offering must be granted; that is the price of becoming the offering.”

“Yes, I see.”

“So, when will we have our first night?”

“What?”

Yuuki widened his eyes in disbelief. The young girl ignored Yuuki and continued, “The couple of the marriage must consummate the bond, entangle their bodies, and produce a child. That should be common sense in this world. It is naturally called the ‘first night’ because it is something that happens in the night. I’m assuming that it is

usually better for it to be done sooner rather than later.”

“Nonono.” Yuuki held his brow, “Sorry, but, what you are trying to say? I don’t understand.”

“Just in case, I’ll explain it to you more clearly. The first night is a ritual where you’re supposed to turn me, your wife, into a woman for the first time.”

“N-no need to say it so clearly!”

“I—I’m sorry. Because it is important, I didn’t want there to be any misunderstandings. Also, you said that you didn’t understand what I was saying.”

“No, well, I did say that,... but, please wait. I do know what you mean, and I appreciate you explaining in a polite way, but even then, it’s still too early for that.”

“Ear... ly? I thought it was always like that... during the Heian and Muromachi period, something like that was completely normal.”

“What era are we talking about now!? More importantly, now, there are a bunch of things to do when you get married. I don’t know how it was in the past though.”

“I—Is that so? No, I guess that’s how it is, that’s right. That was careless of me.”

“Seriously. Please, give me a break.”

“Even if you say it like that, it’s not like I acted without thinking. I judged your personality to be an aggressive one, that’s why I thought that the earlier it was, the better. After all, you did propose to me, a god, the first time we have ever met...”

“Mugu. That was well...”

Somehow, she had a point.

“No, wait. Please wait a moment.” However, Yuuki continued to hang on. Struggling, he chose his words carefully, “Anyways, putting the part about the proposal aside, the two of us don’t know much about each other.”

“Of course it is like that. We have only met for the first time today after all. But we’ll get to know each other some more from now on, right?”

“By the way, I’m only nineteen...”

“As far as I’m concerned, the rules of the world don’t pertain to me. Age is not a problem.”

“Speaking of which, can you even get married? You are a god, right?”

“There isn’t a rule that says I can’t marry because I’m a god. It’s not that rare in other myths after all.”

“Well, that is true, but...”

Both Yuuki’s body and mind were getting heavier. What is this? This feeling of regret? This feeling of hopelessness? Every time I interact with this god, I can hear the sound of my expectations collapsing. Well, how should I put this. I was prepared for something serious, this is completely a love comedy.

“Do you...” Still, Yuuki did not stop resisting, “Do you not dislike it? Marrying someone you don’t know well, so suddenly.”

“I am only fulfilling your wish, that is all.”

“Because that is the rule set by the Tsukumo organization?”

“That’s one part of it. But, there are always ways to find loopholes in those types of things. It isn’t to say that the rule holds no influence, but it isn’t like I am completely restricted by it.”

“Even if you put it that way, if, after marrying, you found out that my personality was the absolute worse. What would you do then?”

“Do not worry about that. When I first met you, I was able to confirm it. You aren’t a bad person. After all, there is a bad atmosphere around people like that, and talking with you like this, I do not feel that way.”

She’s so naïve. One day she’ll be deceived. Or so Yuuki thought, but he didn’t say it out loud. The god looked at Yuuki, however, he couldn’t look into her eyes due to the glittering, pure innocence in her gaze.

“Besides...” Kami-sama added, “You and I will be together forever anyways.”

Such a cheesy thing to say.

Still, it was her first memorable smile. It was a smile that warmed the heart, as if it could blow away the winter coldness, and melt the snow. It seemed to Yuuki, that it maybe wasn't so bad to be devoting himself to her from now on.

(Ah... Dammit) He thought.

At the same time, (I guess I've already decided), he also thought.

Well, this is my one life, a life that was almost given up.

"Ummm... Then..." The speed at which he scratched his head became faster. Ah—Ah—Ah—, he adjusted his tone. He rolled his neck and shoulders in order to relax and dusted off his clothes. Kirishima Yuuki then spoke, "Again, nice to meet you. I'll be in your care."

And Kanaruzawa Sekai replied, "Likewise, I'll be in your care."

†

With all things said and done.

The both of them decided to get married.

---

### **TL Note:**

1. A Hanamaru is that swirly shape from Naruto, if any of you guys have watched it. The shape is generally used to tell students good job. It looks like this:

# Chapter 2

## 第二章



**A long long time ago, there was a goddess.**

**Since the goddess was a goddess, she held a strange power. She made humans, built civilizations, and filled the planet's surface with prosperity.**

**The goddess was respected and worshipped by many people.**

**She didn't dislike that.**

**She loved humans, and she loved the world that she herself had built.**

**In return, humans developed various technologies and arts, foolishness and wisdom, ugliness and beauty; the world glittered like a kaleidoscope, delighting the goddess.**

**The world was overflowing.**

**Yet, "those times" have yet to come.**

Yuuki was told that his daily life was, for the most part, guaranteed.

*"We believe that Yuuki-sama is something that we must keep alive as long as possible. After all, it would be hard to find a replacements."*

Well, thank you for your kindness, or at least, that's what Yuuki thought on the surface. However, his actual thoughts were of cows and pigs that were raised with affection so that they can be eaten later on.

*"What do you mean by daily life?"* Yuuki asked for confirmation. Chiyo-san was the name of the young maid from earlier and to that beautiful and scary person who took care of the goddess's mansion, he asked, *"What range or to what extent is it guaranteed?"*

*"Almost all of it, with a few exceptions."*

*"Then, for example, can I live with my family?"*

*"There is no problem."*

*"Am I free to go out whenever I want without curfew? Is going overseas, OK?"*

*"Feel free to do as you please."*

*"Can I have my own romantic relationships?"*

*"Experiencing your youth should not be a problem."*

*"Then, what if I tried to seduce you, Chiyo-san?"*

*"If you hold sexual frustrations, please do it anytime."*

Yuuki had intended it as a joke, but he got a nod and a smile in return.

It seems that he really could do anything. However, her smile was still scary.

*"Then, or more importantly, I'm curious about what these 'few exceptions' are."*

*"It's not anything very demanding. Understand your role and respond to my mistress's requests. Visit my mistress's place at fixed times and days. That is all."*

*"...Now that I've asked, the job sounds rather simple."*

*"Please, give your feelings of gratitude to my mistress." After answering Yuuki's questions, the maid said, "As the sacrifice, you are allowed to do what you want, that is what our Mistress wishes. Since she has given you this amount of kindness, I ask of you not to make her sad, please? Danna-sama."*

†

*"...And so, I got married."*

*"Is that so. Heeeh~"* Koiwai Kurumi nodded at Yuuki's confession.

They were inside Murakumo Private High School, Second Year, Class A's classroom.

While other classmates already left since it was after school, they, as class representatives, were busy organizing printouts.

*"...eeh? Eeeh?"* About ten seconds late in reacting, Koiwai Kurumi widened her eyes.

“Wai... eh? What did you just say?”

“That’s right. I got married.” Yuuki repeated that as he stapled together the printouts.

“Umm...” His class representative partner made a dazed expression, “Umm... Sorry Yuuki-kun. I don’t understand what you mean by ‘And so’, but I did happen to hear the rest of it. Marriage? Really?”

“Yeah. Marriage. Really.” Yuuki sticks out his chest and flares out his nose in a smug way.

“Ma-ma-ma-marriage. Marriage. Mar-ri-age. M-a-r-r-i-a-g-e...” <sup>[1]</sup> On the other hand, Kurumi had wide eyes and was in a flustered state. “...Nono. Now that I think about it, there is no way that is possible. Stop it, don’t lie to me, because I end up trusting people very easily.”

“Yeah... that’s what you would think right.”

“More importantly, aren’t you the same age as me, 16? You can’t even marry.”

“Yeah... that’s exactly correct.”

“Yuuki-kun is such a bad person, you know, trying to trick me, who is weak, into believing you and then laughing at me. That’s basically a scam. This is what they call a marriage scam.”

Thinking that she said something clever, his classmate laughed, her hair waved around slightly as she shook.

“Besides, if Yuuki got married,” She changed out the staples in the stapler, “I wonder how your sister would react.”

“Let’s see, first, she would probably fall over. Next, she would foam at the mouth and faint. From there, she would revive like a zombie and curse at me. Finally, she would say, I really hate Onii-sama, and cry. Well, that should be how it would go.”

“Right... that sounds about right.”

“It would be nice if she doesn’t bring out the kitchen knives.”

“Yeah. Your sister is such a brocon.”

“Anyways...” Yuuki was checking a bunch of the completed prints. “From now on, for anyone who tries to make passes at me, it’ll be considered adultery. Playing with fire isn’t allowed, you know?”

“I don’t think that would be enough of a restraint to hold her back.”

“No. It’s just small talk.”

“More importantly, how long are you going to keep up? This setting about being married.”

“No idea. Actually, that’s what I would like to ask.”

“Fuun. Weird. I guess it’s normal for Yuuki-kun, though.”

“Well, to be honest...”

Being able to converse lightly like this, being able to live normally and go to school, he felt that this may be the last bit of joy that he could hang on to. To be honest, he never expected to have the chance to talk to Koiwai Kurumi like this today—the other day, when he was summoned by the Tsukumo organization without any prior notice, he had already thought that he would never be returning again.

He was aware that he still had no say, that he still had his role to fulfil, and he would still live on a daily basis according to the assumption that he would one day be unable to return... however, it was as if he was hit by a truck, seeing it happen to him while experiencing the sensations involved, except, he left that experience without any injury at all. That was definitely what Yuuki was feeling right now. He was lacking a feel for reality, to the point where even after a few days, he couldn’t quite put his feet on solid ground.

...He ended up explaining all of his feelings to Kurumi.

“I see.” She nodded. “I understand what you are getting at. The reason that is causing you to act weirdly for these past few days, I completely understand it.”

“...do you really understand? This is from my point of view, but if I were in Koiwai-san’s position, I definitely wouldn’t get it from just my explanation earlier.”

“I got it, for sure. Yuuki-kun is quite popular with girls after all, I can accept it.”

“What?” Yuuki made an expression that seemed to question what she was talking about.

On the other hand, Kurumi had an expression that seemed to say that she has seen through everything.

“Say, Yuuki-kun, don’t you say this sometimes? Just living is a profit, or something along those lines. It’s like you’re enlightened, like your mind has opened to something new... kind of like that.”

“I’m not that big of a deal. There’s a limit to exaggerating you know?”

“Maybe. But you know, most girls say what’s on the inside is more important than the outside. However, that isn’t exactly how it is in reality, how things look and the impression given is what is really important.”

“Fuun. Is that how it is?”

“A Yankee being popular is based on the same reasoning. Don’t you think their hair, dyed a bizarre color and stiffened into spikes is the same as male peacocks and their gorgeous feathers? Anyways, anyone who shows themselves to be good in some way is a winner.”

I see. I feel like I can understand that.

“Basically, girls are weak to dangerous men. What you see as a complicated creature are really very simple.”

“Dangerous men...”

“There are a lot of people that give off that feeling, just to seem cool, but that’s not how Yuuki-kun is. What seems to come from your body... is like the smell of death.”

“Fufu. So, there’s nothing to compliment about me?”

“Nono, there’s no way for that to be the case. After all, Yuuki-kun is a rich young master. If I put my mind to it I can think of a lot of great things? Ufufu.”

“Agh—! All girls are basically looking for money, then!”

“Love and money have about the same amount of importance... Ah, there’s a mistake on the printout.”

“O.K. I’ll fix it.”

Such an exchange had started their afterschool session together.

*“Well, see you tomorrow, Yuuki-kun.”*

As usual, those were always her parting words. They’ve known each other for so long that she became the person that he had confided in about his current circumstances. That’s why to him, there was a meaning in the words, *“see you tomorrow”*, he thought.

Hopefully, there will still be a *tomorrow*.

Hopefully, the day after, and the day after that, and so on, would come to pass without any problems.

†

An opportunity to resume his meeting with Kanaruzawa Sekai was set for the next day.

(Still, this became quite a weird experience.) Katan koton. Katan koton. Yuuki thought while he stood, swaying, on the Sobu Line. (Who would have thought that I would marry a goddess... What will happen from now on?)

He got off at the subway at the station and passed through the ticket gates, and walked along a line of ginkgo trees.

This area was a quiet residential area in Tokyo and was also designated as a specially protected area, as such, there was not much development in this area of town. Here and there, quite a few western style buildings still remained from before the war, with people still living in them.

Yuuki walked down the main road opposite from the station and entered the residential area. The road was a series of slopes and stairs that winded like an old snake, and shortly thereafter, the building of his destination came into view.

This would be his second time visiting the goddess's mansion.

"We have been waiting for you." Standing in front of the blue and rusted gate, Chiyo welcomed Yuuki before he could press the doorbell. "Our mistress is waiting for you. Please come inside."

"...Thank you. Excuse me."

Yuuki couldn't handle the maid very well.

She had a kind of gentle beauty to her and didn't seem very far from in age. However, her smile had an oppressive feeling that made your stomach twist when you saw it.

"Meeting with my Mistress..." Chiyo-san asks as she leads him into the mansion. "Have you gotten used to it yet?"

"Well... I'll manage I think."

"Those words seem reliable, I am much obliged. For you to feel so confident, Yuuki-sama, did you make some sort of preparation?"

"There's nothing like that. However, there is one thing that I have made up my mind on."

"What is it?"

"It's a secret."

"...Very well. As long as there are results, I won't ask for the means. Good luck, I hope things go well."

They arrived in front of Kanaruzawa Sekai's room. Chiyo-san gave a slight bow and disappeared back down the hall, leaving Yuuki alone.

"Now... let's see."

He confronted the door.

Although not as much as the first time, he was still a little bit nervous. They were now married and through that, they were technically husband and wife, but she was still

an otherworldly existence.

How will he be greeted today?

Will she welcome Yuuki in a resolute and gracious way, befitting a high-ranking existence like a goddess?

It was like that originally... but façade was quickly torn down. Will it become another comedic performance again? Hopefully not, but they say that if there's a second time for something there's also a third.

(Well, whatever.) Yuuki stopped hesitating. There isn't any point in thinking about it anymore. If it becomes like the second time, my heart is prepared. It won't become like last time. (Okay, lets go!)

He took a few deep breaths to prepare himself.

After knocking, Yuuki opened the door.

Then, his eyes practically jumped. Sitting there was the figure of a goddess who had lived for a thousand years, naked with red ribbon wrapped all around her body.

"Welcome back, Da—ar—ling."

Yuuki doubted what was in front of his eyes: Kanaruzawa Sekai sitting flatly on her bed, in a worrying pose.

"Do you want a meal? Or a bath? Or maybe you... want... me? Tehe." She said.

"..."

His whole body turning completely white, dark vertical lines showing up around the forehead, and a single drop of blood coming from the end of the lips — this manga-like expression was definitely what described Yuuki at that moment.

"W-welcome back, darling." Sekai attacks again, "Do you want a meal? Or a bath? Or maybe you... want... me? Tehe."

"....."

Yuuki gently closed the door. He returned down the hall with quick steps to the reception room where the maid was waiting.

“Umm, Excuse me. Sorry, Chiyo-san.”

“Is something wrong?”

To the maid, who had calmly lifted a teacup to her lips, he said, “Ummm, well. Your master seems to be an idiot. What should I do?”

“Whether or not it’s a joke, you have quite a bit of nerve to be insulting my Mistress. Shall I give you a kick in the crotch with everything I have as a reward.”

“No, it’s not a joke. I really mean it.”

“There is only one thing I can say.” She said while adding jam to the teacup, “Please return to my Mistress. If you don’t want to, I’ll use my foot and kick you like a soccer ball all the way back down the hall if you want.”

“I am sorry, but I will have to decline.”

“I’m really good at dribbling, though? It can be compared to Maradona <sup>[2]</sup>.”

“That’s an unnecessary concern.”

“Please try and do something about it, if your earlier words were just a lie to show off, I’ll hit you.”

“Nono, even if you say that...”

“Please turn back towards your right. If you don’t, I’ll actually start dribbling you.”



He was chased back. In the end, he has to go back along the same route.

(Well, guess it can't get any worse?) He was still organizing his confused thoughts.

This goddess who has lived for thousands of years, who became his partner for life, had said things that made it seem like something was wrong with her head, all while being naked.

That's all [3].

Aren't those lines usually said while in a naked apron? That question had been blown away by the impact of the situation. What else could he have done except to softly close the door?

However, he couldn't give up his mission. Going back again to the room where the tragedy had played out, he opened the door.

"Uuu... gusu..." She was crying her heart out. Kanaruzawa Sekai used her hands to wipe her tears, leaving the naked ribbon hanging around her, "That was rude. It was way too rude. Even though I had finally brought up my courage to do something like that there wasn't even a reaction... what kind of person would just walk away after seeing something like that..."

"Ah, no, well. What is it? How should I put this...?"

"Was that not done the right way?"

"Well... it isn't exactly normal."

"Did you not have this kind of interest?"

"Isn't there something else you should be asking before wondering whether I had an interest in it."

"If pushed like this, what type of man wouldn't give in?"

"How much misguided information do you have?"

"For old and short person like me, I guess you wouldn't get worked up about me?"

“For someone who’s lived for a thousand years to talk about lifespan...”

“Uu... hikku... fueeh...”

“Ahh! I understand, I understand, so don’t cry. Please, don’t cry!” Nothing makes a guy feel worse than making a woman cry. “Ummm. How should I say this?”

He needed to at least find something to follow up with. Thinking desperately, his thoughts turned within his mind. “Look, it’s that. Basically, I couldn’t react because it was too amazing. Really. That’s why there’s no reason for you to cry.”

“Gusu... Ama... zing?”

“Well... you... that, you know. You were so beautiful and cute, and even sexy, that I didn’t know what to do. That’s why I didn’t say anything and just closed the door softly.”

“Gushu... really?”

“Really really. Seriously.”

“I am beautiful, cute, and appealing?”

“Yeah. I guarantee it.”

“To you, I am an attractive existence?”

“Well... yeah? After all, I did propose to you the first time we met. Would I do that if I didn’t find the person to be attractive? Probably not, right?”

“...Fumun.” Zuzuzu, after she blew her nose, Kami-sama finally stopped crying. “I see. I am attractive. Fufu.”

She turned around and smiled in a good mood. At the same time. Her cheeks were blushing. Her cheeks were of such a bright color, that it was like the color of strawberry syrup mixed into milk.

“Ah.” Tears came to her eyes again as she hugged her chest with both arms tightly, “Please, don’t look at me. I’m so embarrassed that I could die.”

“...Now you’re saying that?”

“It’s just that I wanted to draw your attention.” She narrowed her lips, “I am aware that our meeting was a very weird occurrence. Because of that, I wanted to quickly shorten the distance between us, so I ended up acting boldly.”

“I’m happy for your thoughts, but it is still a little early for what you did.”

“Is that so? However, according to the book, both the naked ribbon and the naked apron were both written down as great techniques.”

“Please dispose of a book like that. Only lies are written in books like that.”

“By the way, that book was a recommendation from Chiyo...”

“That maid!”

So this is what insects in a lion <sup>[4]</sup> means. It seems like there is a need to talk to her at least once. Depending on the reply, it might be Yuuki who would be doing the dribbling, not her.

“Anyways. No matter what you want to do, can you try take it in smaller steps? If you don’t, I won’t be able to keep up.”

“I understand. I’ll do that.”

“Also, do not trust that maid so easily.”

“I understand. I won’t.”

“Umm, and—”

“Hekkuchu!” Kami-sama sneezes.

Hekkuchu! Hekkuchu!

Two more times. It was such a cute sneeze.

“Uu... cold...”

“...Since your dressed like that, of course you would be cold. For now, change into clothes. I’ll be waiting outside.”

†

—Twenty minutes later.

Yuuki finally faced a properly dressed Kanaruzawa Sekai.

“Fuu. That feels better.” Pukapuka, the goddess smoked her cigar while giving a sigh of relief. “Nevertheless, there are many things in this world that I don’t know. I have realized that my common sense is not equal to the common sense of a normal person.”

“Is that so? That’s good.”

“Today’s experience has become a great lesson for the future. I am grateful to you, Yuuki. Because of you, I have gotten a little wiser.”

“Your welcome... By the way...” Sitting down in a chair for guests, Yuuki questions her. “If it is possible, would you mind turning around when you talk to me? For a while now, you have been facing away from me as you talk to me.”

“I refuse.” While sitting in the rocking chair and facing outside through the window, the goddess gives an adamant refusal. “At least for today, I have decided to not look at your face today. This is what I, as goddess, have decided.”

“...well, I understand how you feel, but...”

“In my thousand years of living, that was the most embarrassing thing that I have done.” She squeezed her shoulders while trembling, “Actually, there was probably something wrong with me. Now that I can calmly think about it, I was completely pulled along by Chiyo... it was all her fault.”

“That’s right. She’s the one at fault.”

“Therefore, I have done nothing wrong.”

“No. Normally, someone would still think you had some sort of responsibility in this.”

“Muu?”

“So, please look this way. Otherwise, it’s too hard to talk to you. Actually, don’t you think it’s a bit rude? You are a goddess, and I belong to you, but I am still a guest of sorts.”

“Munu...” With a small cry of protest, the goddess becomes silent.

After a while, she turns around with great reluctance, “Towards the old and short me, aren’t you a bit too strict.”

“I don’t want to hear that from a person who has lived for a thousand years.”

“However, you have a point with what you have said. And so, I will turn around and speak to you. I will hold in my embarrassment.”

Unexpectedly, she was quite straightforward.

After seeing her like this, Yuuki ended up feeling more attracted to her. There was no way for him to hate her.

“Alright. Then, once again. Hello, Kami-sama.”

“Y-yeah. Hello, Kirishima Yuuki.”

“This is the first time we have been able properly speak to each other like this. As such, we can treat this like our first meeting, and open up with a reasonable pace.”

“Yeah. That is correct.”

“It’s such nice weather today. Last time it was snowing though.”

“Yeah. It’s warm and relaxing today.”

After she finished smoking one cigar, Sekai found and lit a new one. Her pace was fast. According to Yuuki’s abundant common sense, cigars should be enjoyed slowly over a somewhat long period of time... maybe they don’t last that long, or maybe she was just really nervous.

“For now, I have a few things I would like to ask.”

“Yeah. Please ask me anything.”

“Our relationship, what is it going to become?”

“Hmm?”

“I was offered to you as a sacrifice, and so I became your property. That is correct, right?”

“Yeah. That is correct.”

“However, I ended up proposing to you, and you accepted it. Therefore, we also have the relationship of husband and wife... what does this mean exactly? Which relationship takes precedence?”

“I am troubled even if you ask me.” The goddess said that without any hesitation. “About our relationship, neither Chiyo or the Tsukumo organization have said anything about it. Therefore, I can’t judge it, nor can I make a decision about it.”

“...so thoughtless...”

“There’s no need to mind it. It’s fine to not think about things you don’t understand. It’s a waste of time. Nothing has been said to you about it, right?”

“Well, that’s true. Nothing has been said to me.”

“What else would you like to ask about?”

“Umm, well... that’s right, why was I chosen exactly? For what reason did I become your property?”

“I am troubled even if you ask me.” The goddess said that without any hesitation. “It is the job of the Tsukumo organization to pick the offering, I have no say in who it is. I am not even given a reason. As such, I have no idea about the reason you were chosen.”

“...no, well, even then...”

“Even though I am a goddess, I’m not an omnipotent and omniscient existence.” With a troubled expression, she said, “That’s why, I don’t know what I don’t know. I can’t tell you something I don’t know. If you do want to know, you should ask Chiyo. She should know what you want to find out about.”

“I guess it’s impossible, then. Even if I ask Chiyo-san, she won’t even tell me anything, that’s why I’m asking you.”

“I see. If it’s like that, then there’s nothing you can do. You give it up.”

“Nono. Since it’s important, you should be trying to follow up in some way. More importantly, since you’re a goddess, a person of great status, of higher status than Chiyo-san—”

“Such a weak thoughts. I thought it was explained pretty simply and clearly, but you still can’t understand. I hope not but maybe, you’re actually an idiot?”

“...”

She had on a very worried expression that gave Yuuki a very weird feeling.

“But I can say this I believe?” Seeing Yuuki like that, the goddess adds. “Me meeting you like this, and talking to you, is something I really looked forward to. And now, I am really enjoying it. For me, this is everything.”

“...Is that so. Thanks for that.”

Again, without any bad intentions, she seriously put that out there. Being shown such a straightforward attitude, Yuuki had nothing that he could say. It’s somewhat embarrassing.

“Roger. I understand.” He changed the topic. “More importantly, there’s something I wanted to say to you today.”

“Yeah. Let’s hear it.”

“First, before that, I want to know more about you. Technically, well, we’re a married couple now, right? That’s correct, right? However, we don’t really know much about each other. Let’s start by properly getting to know each other first.”

“I agree completely with you on that, Yuuki. I also want to know more about you. Everything should start from there—it makes me relieved as it seems like you aren’t actually an idiot.”

“Thank you very much for that. Ummm, then, I have a question right now.”

“Wait, wait. For a while now, you have done nothing but ask questions. Even I have a lot of things that I want to know about you. Now, it’s time for the old and short me to have her turn.”

“Well, I guess I have been pushing you quite a bit.” For now, he would bear with it. But where was he supposed to start.

“Let me hear about your past.” That was the goddess’s request.

“Talk about my past...” Yuuki scratched his head. “It might not be an interesting story, though?”

“I do not mind.”

“Moreover, it’s not something I really want to remember.”

“I insist.”

The goddess was eager for it.

She was so focused, that she didn’t notice that the fire on the cigar had gone out. Apparently, there was no way out. In the end, Yuuki decided to say what he could.

†

It has been 16 years since Yuuki has been born. He was the born successor to Kirishima Pharmaceuticals, a pharmaceutical company that has stood for three generations already. His father married into the family but had a calm personality with an ambition that wasn’t small. On the other hand, his mother had a short temper and was quite spontaneous, but she was hardworking and kind.

The couple was well-educated and economically well off, so it can be said that Yuuki grew up in a “blessed” environment.

However, a little after he started going to elementary school, the winds changed. One day, a man, with a fake smile on his face and dressed in a salesman like outfit, came to visit the mansion of the Kirishima family. *“Congratulations. We have found that your son will be the one to save this world. Therefore, at some point in the future, we will come to pick him up, at that time, please let him go.”* Of course, at the beginning, no one took him seriously. The man’s words were rude, surprising, and seemed meaningless above

all else. His father was shocked, his mother outraged, they chased out the man and sprinkled salt behind him. That was how that day went down.

But the man came again the next day.

The man came again the next day, and the day after that, and each time would say, “*Congratulations*”. Of course, the man was prohibited from freely entering the premises of the mansion, and no one should be inviting him over, and yet, he would always enter from somewhere and end up suddenly at the front door with a fake smile plastered over his face.

Neither the police, the detectives, nor the security company were helpful in anyway. The man definitely had something up his sleeve, as the man would always be able to bypass the security and intrude the Kirishima family’s mansion. No one knew who he was, where he came from, or where he lived.

His parents, feeling disturbed, gave way and reluctantly allowed the man another chance to speak.

This time as well, the same things as before were said. That there was a goddess in this world and that this goddess protected this world. That Yuuki was chosen to be given to the goddess, or in other words, a sacrifice. This decision can not be overturned, and they were not given the right to refuse—

His parents were furious. Even his father, normally gentle, threatened the man with his face bright red.

*“Retribution for talking to us like this will definitely come”*, those words came pouring out in anger like hot oil. Both his father and mother stood fast and firmly refused the man.

I understand, the man nodded with his face still covered in a fake smile. I will come again someday to ask again, at that time, I expect a good reply.

At that, his parents snorted in laughter. The both of them were determined to not give way even one step. It was a confidence backed by real facts. After all, Kirishima Pharmaceuticals was a large global company. It had connections with politicians, the police, the mass media, and even within the military. They also had an abundance of wealth. With all these resources, if they couldn’t even protect their one and only son,

how could they call themselves father and mother?

They could afford to do even more.

However, looking at the results, that confidence didn't even last half a year.

First, their relationships with friends were targeted. The politicians, the police, the mass media, the military. Their friends broke relationships with them, and they were no longer invited to parties or other events, and even stopped talking to them over the phone. Even the neighborhood was affected, causing Yuuki to be beaten in dark alleys and to be talked about behind his back. And slowly but surely, he became isolated at school.

The company was targeted next. A hostile takeover was attempted as someone tried to steal the seat of the company president, the stock price for the company crashed by due to some random gimmick, and all of the responsibility was pinned onto the parents of the founding family.

Adding on to that, the relationships with relatives were targeted. Although their relationship with relatives were not necessarily good, they were still connected by blood, but the relatives slowly distanced themselves from his family one by one and turned coat.

All of these things connected and flowed into a single muddy flow as they were swept away in one fell swoop. It became a scandal. Reporters for magazines came by every day. Politicians expressed concern and regret, the police took opportunities to hide and falsify evidence, the mass media repeatedly bashed them, and debt collectors attacked without mercy.

With this, his parent's hearts quickly and completely crumbled.

In the end, they were one step away from committing family homicide. Actually, it was attempted; however, just before it happened, the attempt was discovered and it ended as just an attempt. Even after all this, his parents refused to sacrifice their son.

The last push came from the young Yuuki himself. *"It's alright. I'll go,"* he said. He did not know what would happen when he's sacrificed, however, he thought everything would be fine as long as he shouldered the burden himself. Moreover, him being a sacrifice would not be a waste. Nothing would happen immediately, but if he could really save the world, then there is nothing else better for him to do. His parents had

tried for long enough already—

The same man who came frequently before, with the same fake smile from before, returned and asked. *“Well? What is your reply?”*

His parents dropped their shoulders weakly and admitted defeat.

That was the moment that Kirishima Yuuki’s life changed completely, the moment when his life would never return back to the way it was before.

†

“They’re so scary. The Tsukumo Organization.” After talking for a long time, Yuuki was finally able to take a breather. “Our company was pretty big, you know? Large to the extent that our president was a major figure who was very profitable. Yet that company was driven to the point of bankruptcy in an instant. They really are so scary.”

“Is that so. That must have been a disaster.”

Sekai nods, while Yuuki continues to speak about the episode.

“That time, when my family attempted homicide, the reason it stopped so quickly was probably because the Tsukumo organization had a hand in it. After all, the timing that they had was too good... here, look at this.” Saying that, Yuuki pointed at part of his neck, “Unless you look closely you wouldn’t notice it but... Over here, there’s a scar from where they strangled me. It was made when my family attempted homicide. Since then, it hasn’t healed.”

His father and his mother, there were marks from each of their hands.

Yuuki remembered that moment very clearly. The hollow look in his parent’s eyes. The suffering from being unable to breathe. His conscious slowly fading—he had intended to throw away his memories of the event at the time, but he still painfully remembers it.

“I was suffocating, losing my breath, I had really felt like I was hanging on the verge of death. Like cornering someone into a bad position is OK, but actually pushing someone off a cliff is NG. At least that’s how it should be between close acquaintances. Well, in the end, there’s no meaning if I ended up dying.”

“Yeah. I would be troubled if you died.”

“It was like watching a soccer game where 100 points were taken in just the first half. The match was over pretty early on. That’s why, to be honest, I already given up very early on. But I couldn’t say it. If I did, I would’ve felt bad. For those people who just barely held on and tried their best.”

“Yeah. It’s not like I don’t understand that feeling.”

“As you expected though, ending it there didn’t end up helping very much. My relationship with the rest of the family never returned back to before... by the way, after the incident, the company’s sales doubled. Relatives also came back, the relationship with neighbors improved, and connections with politicians and other people also returned. I guess, it was no lie when the man said that we would be given ‘guaranteed returns’.”

“Of course it’s like that. It should be natural that some sort of repayment would be made for something like that.”

“Well, that’s what happened... But, my bad.”

“What are you apologizing for?”

“I still ended up making you cry.” Yuuki lowers his head in apology. “I knew it was a sad story, but I didn’t expect you to cry so much.”

“What are you saying—”

That was her limit.

The goddess had stubbornly tried to hold it back, but eventually she began to cry. It was like a clear midsummers day suddenly being covered in clouds,

“Sorry, sorry Yuuki. You must have been so sad. It was probably hard on you as well. It was my fault. Sorry, sorry...”

“You don’t need to say that!” Flustered, Yuuki quickly brought out his handkerchief. “It’s alright. Don’t cry. It’s already in the past.”

“Uwaa... aaaaaaaaaa, Sorry, sorry, uaaaaa”

“It’s alright, I have already accepted what has happened. Actually, I’m quite grateful to you. The company did get bigger after all, and now there are a bunch of new workers with jobs instead of walking around with nothing to do.”

“But, everything is my—hikku, ueee”

“I don’t intend to push all the blame on to you. There was nothing you could do anyway, right? The people from the Tsukumo organization probably didn’t do it because they wanted to either. Even if it isn’t like that, it’s alright. That’s what I seriously think.” With that said, Yuuki crouched and adjusted his line of sight. The goddess, with watery red eyes filled with uneasiness, looked straight at him. Yuuki also looks back at her without blinking, “I am glad that I could meet you. It’s enough to make everything even. That’s how I feel. I have met you only two times now, and we’ve had strange conversations, but still... what do you think?”

“Me too.” The goddess smiled while crying. “I am the same. I’m glad that I met you.”

“Is that so. That’s good.” Yuuki also smiles. “By the way. I had something to tell you today.”

“Yeah. Let’s hear it.”

“I proposed to you, and you accepted the proposal... But” Kohon, he coughed to clear his throat, “I’ve been thinking. Once we marry, what should we do. After all, when I did it, I did it without thinking, while going with the flow, and had no plan at all.”

“Yeah. Definitely done without any sense of planning at all.”

“Anyways, after thinking about it, I came up with one thought. Well, I talked about it with the Maid-san earlier for a little bit—it’s about what I need to do now that I have married you.” Kohon, he coughed to clear his throat again. “Kami-sama. I want to make you happy.”

“...make me happy?”

“Yeah. That’s what I have decided. No matter what happens, no matter what you do, I will make you happy. It doesn’t matter if the world turns against us. For the sake of your happiness, I will become especially selfish. That is the one absolute rule that I need to follow after proposing to you.” Yuuki strongly asserted that. The goddess, on the other hand, looked surprised. “...No. Sorry, it probably seems obvious in the first

place. Actually, it probably should've been done in the opposite order, but don't worry about it. I wonder, did I say too much? Yeah, that's right, if something like this was said so suddenly, normally, one would—"

"No." The goddess shakes her head. "It's no problem. It's very wonderful. Very very nice. I see, for the sake of making me happy. It doesn't matter if the world becomes my enemy." She nodded quietly. Closing her mouth tightly, she rolled her tongue as if trying to slowly savor the taste of something like wine. "Yeah. That makes me happy. Very happy. Fufu, thank you, Yuuki. I am very happy. I am thankful from the bottom of my heart."

Then, she smiles. Like a flower that just bloomed, she smiled.

What is this, Yuuki thought. What is this dazzling smile?

"By the way," The goddess spoke to Yuuki, whose thoughts were still a mess. "I also have something to say to you. Will you hear it?"

"Something you want to say?"

"That's right. It's very, very important. Just like you, I believe it's something that should have been said first—"

Fuu, she took a deep breath.

Then, she corrected her posture.

"But if I don't say it now, it will be impossible. After all, I am old and short. That's why, you need to prepare yourself as I say this."

"Ye... yeah." Naturally, Yuuki straightens his back. "I don't know what it is, but make sure you tell me clearly. Bring it on."

"Is it alright? Are you prepared to take anything I say?"

"Well—probably. Most things are alright. I think."

"If you listen half-heartedly and you end up regretting it, you won't be able to take responsibility?"

“Hey, don’t try to scare me. What is it now?”

Slightly shivering, Yuuki braces himself.

Seeing him like that, the goddess makes a literally god-like expression.

“As goddess, as your wife, I order Kirishima Yuuki.”

“Ple—Please be easy on me.”

“I want you to call me by my name.”

“What?”

“Name. My name. Kanaruzawa Sekai.” Her eyes were still red and swollen from tears. She showed her white teeth, “You still have yet to call me once by my name. This is strange since we’re husband and wife. So, from now on, call me properly by name. Do you understand?”

After she said that, she laid back in an arrogant manner.

...it was a new discovery. It seems that the goddess is surprisingly mischievous.

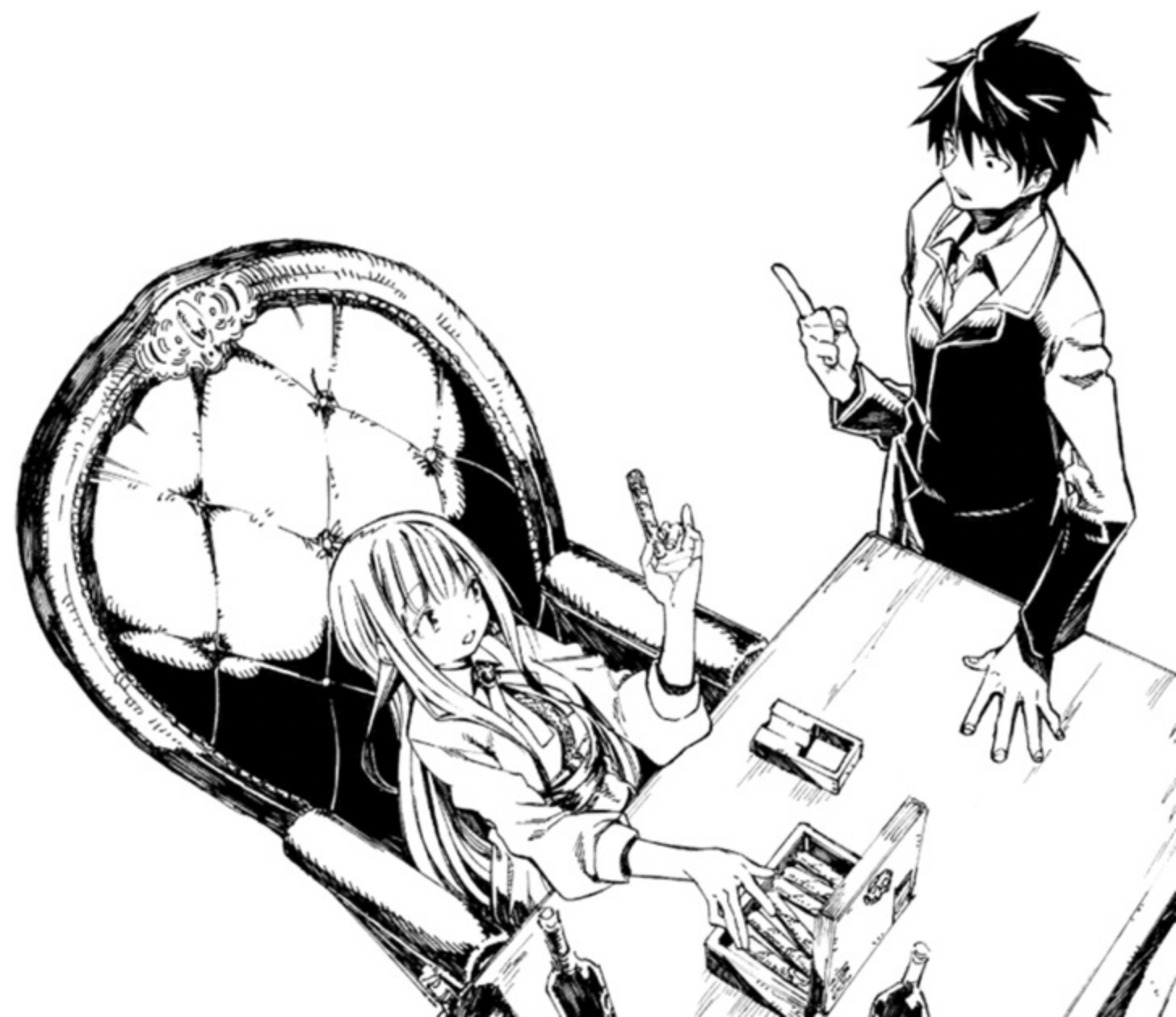
---

### **TL Note:**

1. She said marriage in different ways every single time. Once normally with kanji, hiragana, and katakana. I did my best to differentiate between all of them.
2. Maradona is a famous soccer player known as one of the greatest of all time.
3. I don’t know if this changes your impression, but this was said straight up in English.
4. This is what is written literally. It is a Japanese idiom that basically means to be destroyed or defeated from the inside. Based off a story of a lion eating some bugs and getting eaten out from the inside.

# Chapter 3

### 第三章



The goddess was an amazing existence, but she was the type to easily get bored. In any case, the goddess had lived for a very long time, so it was something that was inevitable.

The goddess eventually got bored with the world that she had made and stopped doing the work that needed to be done. Because of this, the world's balance slowly broke down. After all, the omnipresent goddess was an all-powerful existence, without the goddess, the world could not stand.

The people began to pray. Please goddess, please continue doing your duty as you have before. Since we are weak existences created by the goddess, we will soon be unable to live.

Although she didn't really make too much progress on it, she began to think of a good solution. After all, she needed to take responsibility for the world she created but was there a way to make it easier for her, to make it more amusing for her.

Then, the goddess came up with a way.

After that, Yuuki got to know her a lot better.

"My interests? Let's see, for example, this. This cigar." Sekai said with shining eyes. "Cigars are great. It really lets you feel a deep and beautiful pleasure. If I had to pick one item in this world that has given me the most influence, without a doubt, I would choose this one. You should try smoking just once. It will change your life, you know?"

She really pushed him on. So, just once, he tried smoking one on Sekai's recommendation.

The result was terrible. He coughed the moment he breathed it in, the bitter smoke was painful on his nose, throat, and lungs. Seeing this, Sekai held her stomach and started laughing at him. With that, Yuuki swore within his heart that he would never smoke a cigar ever again.

"By the way, Yuuki." Sekai further explains, "Do you know? The way to enjoy cigars or cigarettes are different?"

“But both of them seem the same...”

“In the first place, the cigar smoke should not be breathed into the lungs. Also, unlike cigarettes, they should be enjoyed slowly. It’s common for one to be smoking a single cigar for a whole hour. Even if it becomes unlit partway through, there isn’t a problem, which is another big difference between the two.”

“More importantly though, I’m more worried about your health, Sekai. Aren’t you smoking a little too much?”

“Mufu. It makes me glad that your worried. But there is no need for you to worry. Even if I do smoke, I am goddess, so the smoke from smoking cigars will not harm my body.”

“Even though your body is supposed to be a old and short?”

“This and that are different.”

“Still, I’m not only worried about your health, but also about your image. I mean, when it comes to girls who smoke, to be honest, the impression you get from that isn’t great.”

“Muu?”

“No, I mean, it may not affect you since you’re a goddess. But girls are people who give birth to children, and damaging your health, that’s somewhat worrying.”

“Chi-children, isn’t it a bit too early to be talking about that?”

“No, I don’t mean it that way.”

“As I thought, shouldn’t we be having our first night as early as possible? Once we start living as a couple, I hear it will be difficult?”

“As—I—was—saying. There has to be something wrong with your head, why do you always want to rush things?... Anyways, what I wanted to say was that cigars don’t really match with your image.”

“...I see. I understand. If that’s what Yuuki wishes, as of today I swear I won’t smoke cigars anymore. Uu... gusu~”

“If you hate it so much that you end up crying it’s fine if you continue.”

“Uu... is that so, thank you... Yuuki is such a nice person...”

And with that, it was settled.

They had another conversation at a later date.

“Are? What is that?”

One day, there was a small change when Yuuki came to visit Sekai’s room. Sekai wasn’t smoking a cigar. Instead, she had something white and slender inside her mouth.

“Nn. This?” Sekai points to the white thing in her mouth. “It’s what they call a chocolate cigarette. It looks like a cigarette but it isn’t one. It’s is a childish substitute basically.”

“...Why that? Why do you have that?”

“It isn’t because you told me to stop smoking, okay?” Sekai held a pompous attitude, “After all, I don’t care about my own image. However, we need to be concerned about your health. I have noticed that inviting you to a room filled with smoke, could cause your health to worsen.”

“Haa. I see.”

“Of course I would think that, right? We are married to each other after all.”

With that said, the goddess suddenly turns away, while she continues to bite down on her chocolate. Her cheeks were slightly red. While he tried to hold back the laughter within his heart, Yuuki was grateful for her concern.

†

It wasn’t just cigars that Sekai liked; she also liked alcohol.

“Liking both alcohol and cigars, that’s somewhat new...”

“What do you mean by new?”

“No, well. Somehow it is.”

“Then isn’t that alright. It’s not like it is bothering anyone specifically.”

“Well, that’s right, but still.”

“Also, I’m not a minor like you.”

“You’re right.”

“By the way, try looking around that bookshelf over there.”

“Look for?”

“Next to the bookshelf, there’s a hidden switch.”

Looking around as he was told, there certainly was a switch. A mysterious button in an unnatural position.

Yuuki tried pushing the button and was surprised. A low sound came out—it had some sort of power source—the sounds seemed to echo as the bookshelf slid to the side, and the storage space behind it was exposed.

Inside, bottles of alcohol were lined up and arranged. Ones that seemed new and others that seemed old. Amber colored, straw colored, russet colored.

It was like a museum.

“...What is this? How many are there?”

“There are roughly 500 of them. Yuuki, please pick one out and bring it over here.”

Of course, he knew nothing about alcohol. However, when he picked one that seemed suitable and handed it to Sekai, she seemed happy,

“Fumu. A nice choice. Albin, I see.”

“I don’t exactly know. Is it good?”

“It’s a whiskey distillery that has already been closed. Why not have a taste.”

“It’s still too early for me.”

“Fumu, I see. Well, if you drink it you would understand.”

Sekai seemed very disappointed when she said that. So, Yuuki poured a little bit of the brown liquid down his throat.

The result was terrible. His throat started to burn the moment he drank it, his stomach became uncomfortable, and then he coughed and rushed to drink water. Seeing this, Sekai held her stomach and started laughing at him. With that, Yuuki swore in his heart that he would never drink alcohol again.

†

There was also a shocking episode like this.

“There is something that I’ve have been wondering about for a while now.”

“Try saying it. I will answer anything.”

“It’s about your name.”

“Oh?”

“Your name, Kanaruzawa Sekai. It gives a really weird feeling.” Yuuki said while turning his neck. “How should I say this... first of all, I think it’s a somewhat exaggerated name. After all, it’s the world <sup>[1]</sup>? The World, you know? If my parents gave me such a name... it makes me shiver just thinking about it. I would definitely feel like I’ve lost in life when it comes to my name if it was like that.”

“Fumufumu. So?”

“The valley where the goddess calls <sup>[2]</sup>, that’s quite something. At least, I have never met of anyone else with the same last name, nor have I heard of it.”

“You really do point out some good points.” Sekai made an exaggerated nod. As if she was waiting for this moment, she continued to speak on, “I have no name in the first place. I may have had one before, but I lost it a long time ago. After all, living for a thousand years, there’s bound to be various things that I would forget.”

“I guess you’re old, short, and quick to forget things?”

“However, having no name is inconvenient. Normally, I wouldn’t need one, but that isn’t convenient when I’m with you. After all, if our relationship is where we can’t call

each other by name, I would never be able to become closer to you.”

“Yeah. I can understand that part.”

“That’s why, I gave a name to myself.”

“Eh.” Yuuki blinked two or three times, “You? You did yourself? You gave yourself that name? That name.”

“Indeed. I named myself.”

“Hmmm...” Yuuki folded his arms and thought. “But, why did you pick that name? No, well, you are a god, so there shouldn’t be a problem with a grand name like that.”

“It isn’t like you to ask such a useless question. The reason why I gave myself the name of Kanaruzawa Sekai is simple. Because it’s cool.”

“Hmmm.” Again, Yuuki folded his arms. Like that, he contemplated for a minute, “You know, Sekai?”

“What is it, Yuuki?”

“I doubted it earlier. But aren’t you an idiot?”

“That’s quite rude. The one who calls the other an idiot is the one who’s actually an idiot.”

“Or is it that? You have that chuunibyou thing?”

“That’s also another rude thing to say. Young people looking up to supernatural existences and tricking themselves into thinking they have become one. I am an actual goddess you know. A goddess gave herself a name that proves their own greatness, there shouldn’t be a complaint, right?”

It was a sound argument.

Actually, Yuuki was surprised she even knew chuunibyou was. Regardless of whether or not she’s an idiot, this goddess seems to have a pretty large strike-zone when it comes to knowledge.

The goddess was also very much a shut-in.

“By the way... do you ever going to go outside? Or do you just stay in your room?”

“I don’t go out. I am an indoor person.”

“Sorry to say, but I’m more of an outdoor type of person.”

“I see. Our interests don’t match I guess.”

“To put it another way, I like to pull cats out from sleeping under a kotatsu, and forcefully try to play with and hug them.”

“Are you a sadist? Ignoring the thoughts of a perfectly happy cat and doing something so terrible to it, isn’t that even more scary than a god.”

Etcetera etcetera.

While giving various reasons, she refuses to stand up from her chair.

“Ah—mou— anyways, anything is fine, let’s just go outside for a bit! Go see the outside world for a bit, isn’t it really nice weather outside? If you don’t move about a bit on a day like this, your body will begin to rot.”

“...Well well. Such an energetic man.” With that said, Sekai squinted her eyes, as if looking at something bright. Then, she smiled and closed her book, “Then, let’s do this. If you are willing to carry me, I will be willing to go outside.”

“What? Carry you?” Yuuki blinked in surprise. “Carrying you like that? Do you mean like on my back?”

“Umu. What you are thinking of is probably correct. It is that.”

“Carrying you on my back, is that right? You just want someone carry you everywhere, or is it something else?”

“I don’t need an idiot like that.” Sekai looked at him with smug eyes. Then, with a “kukuku”, she began to laugh, “As I thought, you seem pretty scared, Yuuki? Well, no

doubt, even in your dreams you wouldn't have thought I would set such a high hurdle for you."

"Haa."

"After all, it is a piggyback. The act of a man carrying a woman on his back means that both of them will stick to each other as much as possible. Adding on to that, their faces become very close. By saying even one word, you would be able to feel a breath on your ear... kukuku. Isn't imagining it such a frightening thing?"

Saying that, Sekai revealed a chilling smile.

By the way, as she was imagining all these scenes inside her head, her cheeks became a little red. It seems she was somewhat embarrassed.

"Well, let's hear your reply, Yuuki. Well, it's alright if you can't. I won't make fun of you for being a coward."

"Yeah. I see..."

"Y-you don't have to push yourself if you don't want to? After all, it is a very embarrassing thing. Even if you run away with your tail between your legs, I won't think any lower of you."

Even though she was the one who provoked him in the first place, she was the one who seemed to be more scared. Why is she acting like that when she was the one who had proposed having a first night to someone she had met for the first time?

"Let's see. What should I do?" He looked at Sekai, who was now fidgeting. Yuuki contemplated for a little bit. "Alright, I have decided. Let's not do a piggyback."

"Yeah." Sekai breathed a sigh of relief. At the same time, she looked a little bit disappointed, but she quickly put up a composed attitude, "Well, that's that. Don't feel bad, Yuuki. You weren't a coward, it was just that the other party was bad. Pulling back when it is time to pull back is a sign—"

"So, here's what I'll do instead."

With that said, Yuuki stands up. He walked in front of Sekai, and before she could question him, he hugged her with both arms and held her up.

“Yeah. Well, I wouldn’t say you were light, but it’s not something I can’t carry.”

“Eh.”

“Then, let’s go out like this. For now, we can try walking around the garden. The camellias are pretty, you know?”

“Eh. Eh.” It was the so-called “princess carry”. Sekai widened her eyes at her sudden realization of the situation. She turned bright red. “W—w—wait a minute.”

Wait a minute.

What are you doing.

...Is what she seems be saying.

“I’m giving you a princess carry. You should understand it after seeing it, right?” To allow her to understand the current situation, he properly explained the situation.

Fungyaa——, she screamed.

It was not a cat. It was from Kanaruzawa Sekai.

“W—w—w—w—w—what are you doing!?”

“No, well. I’m giving you a princess carry.”

“Why are you saying that so lightly! D—d—d—d—d—doing something like this so suddenly!”

“If I don’t do it suddenly you would’ve resisted.”

“Of course! Suddenly, doing something, doing something—”

Sekai struggled and struggled.

She continued to struggle. She shook her head, waved her arms and legs, just like a cat. Just like a cat being held forcibly against its will.

“Well, let’s go. Stop struggling. Because your old and short, isn’t it better to do this kind

of thing while you still can?”

“...uuuuuuu~~~~~”

Sekai made a groan to express her regret but didn't resist any further.

Truthfully speaking, Yuuki was also quite embarrassed, but a man has to protect his image.

They went out into the garden.

The garden in the mansion wasn't very large, but it was well taken care of. There was also a rich variety of trees in the garden. Despite it being winter, the brilliant green color of trees was still present. Large and small birds played on the trees. Not only were there the camellias beautiful, but there were also other vermillion colored flowers that were dazzling to the eye.

“Quite nice, the garden here.” Yuuki voiced his impression. The princess carry was still going on. “It's not too flashy, nor is it plain. From one end to another, it is clear lots of thought was put into it. To be honest, I prefer this garden more than my parent's.”

“...I see. Then I'll let the person who takes care of this place know about your thoughts.”

“It's probably because that person has good sense. I don't think someone with good sense would be a bad person.”

“By the way, Chiyo is the one that is in charge of taking care of this area.”

“Alright, I take back what I said earlier.” Yuuki had a bitter expression.

“She's the one and only servant takes care of everything in the mansion, the shrine maiden that bridges the gap between humans and god, and also an authority within the Tsukumo organization. If not for Chiyo, I wouldn't be able to live like this.”

“A shrine maiden with maid clothes? That's somewhat new... on another note, have you gotten used to this current position? You're much calmer than you were before.”

“Fun. I won't keep sulking forever.” Sekai flares her nose with a proud feeling.

However, even while she was being carried like a princess, she didn't seem like one.

Like this, the both of them looked around the garden. They kept walking around all the way until the limits of his arm strength came and his arms became numb.

The world sure was beautiful. Sekai quietly muttered those words to herself.

Yuuki gave her a glance but didn't say anything. Her red eyes somehow had a shine in them that made them bright to look at.

†

In the end, who exactly is Kanaruzawa Sekai?

"A goddess. Nothing more, and nothing less." She replied. "Sorry, but I can only answer that much. There aren't many things that I can say about myself."

"Why? Is there a reason that you need to keep it a secret?"

"There is one. But I also don't know very much about myself." Saying that, Sekai began to smoke a new cigar. "It's been a long time now, but I was a human once."

"...Is that so? Really?"

Yuuki looked surprised, but he was able to accept it in his heart. After all, the goddess felt a lot like a human. It's not to the extent that he wouldn't be able to think of her as human.

"I forgot exactly how things went. However, after following some process, I remember I was 'chosen'. From then on, I have always remained as god."

"Haa... I see. That sounds troublesome."

"Agreed. It is definitely troublesome." Sekai laughs.

It seemed sarcastic, or not quite. It was more like the time when Yuuki was watching the neighborhood kids playing and running around, passing by while not saying anything. It was that kind of laugh.

"Then, what exactly is your job as the goddess?"

"To save the world. I strive to maintain the state of the world and how it should be.

Kind of like a manager of sorts.”

“What do you maintain and how?”

“..”

Mogumogu.

Mushamusha.

Sekai slowly savors her chocolate cigarette. Nothing could be read from her expression. Sometimes she looks like this. Like some fairy, some sage, or some hermit—something quite different from usual emotionally rich Kanaruzawa Sekai.

“I’ve been wondering this for a while now.” Yuuki says with a little bit of annoyance. “Are you really a god?”

“Umu. I’m pretty sure.”

“Somehow, to me... you seem like a normal human, just like me.”

“Of course I do. I was human to begin with.” Sekai raised one eyebrow, questioning him. “Rather, technically speaking, I am closer to a human than a god. If it wasn’t for my powers, I wouldn’t have been worshipped after all.”

“Then, why do you want to live like a human?”

“Me?”

“Yes. You live so close to humans, isn’t that because you want to live life as a human?”

“If I could retire from being a god, then I would like to try that idea.” Sekai made a laugh from deep within her throat.

Then, with the eyes of an elder who looks over younger people, “However, unfortunately, there is no one that could replace me. To the extent that I like alcohol and cigars, I think it is my role to fulfil my duties properly... by the way, Yuuki, you shouldn’t say something like that too often?”

“What?”

“If the Tsukumo organization judges that your existence will have a negative effect on the world, they will not hesitate to kill you. Even if your safety is guaranteed and finding a replacement for you is hard, there are always exceptions. Be careful.”

“Thank you for the warning.” Yuuki scratches his head. Certainly, taking further action in this has no merit. “But you know. Now I feel like I’ve become someone who can only speak but not act.”

“What do you mean?”

“Somehow, I don’t feel like I’m actually making you very happy. Even if you say I have done a lot for you, all I’ve really done is to come over every few days and haven’t really done anything.”

“Don’t say something so stupid. I am quite happy. You are doing enough to fulfill your role. So be more confident in yourself.”

“...Well. I’m going to be accompanying you for the rest of your life anyways.”

“Umu. That’s right.”

Saying that, she smiled. Kanaruzawa Sekai, the goddess that protects this world, is just that kind of person.

Yuuki gave a small smile and stopped complaining.

He wouldn’t regret this interaction, or at least not for a little while.

†

Christmas has passed, New Year’s was coming soon, with winter break about to end.

“First of all, more important than anything else,”

On this day, they were in the Kirishima family’s garden.

His little sister sat on the other side of the table, smiling while putting milk into her tea. “I am glad Onii-sama was able to stay unharmed till today. To be honest, I had been prepared for the worst case.”

“I agree. I thought so too.” Yuuki nodded in in his heart as he brought the Renty <sup>[3]</sup> cup to his mouth.

As long as the weather held up, this was where the siblings would have their conversations.

Today, the sky was somewhat cloudy, but thanks to the small charcoal heater placed under the table and the blanket covering it, they did not feel too cold.

“That annoying Tsukumo organization,” Frowning with her elegant eyebrows, his sister, Kirishima Haruko, angrily called out. “In the unlikely event that you were hurt, Onii-sama, I would have killed them even if I had to give up my life.”

“That’s not exactly a very gentle thing to say.”

“Of course. Unless I accomplished this feat for Onii-sama, I wouldn’t be able to die without regrets. As long as the successor to the Kirishima family hasn’t been born between us yet, it is necessary to treasure both Onii-sama’s and my life.”

“Leaving aside the part about our successors, nothing says that it will be a child between the two of us though?”

“Not scattering our young flower <sup>[4]</sup> recklessly started out alright but became a really unfortunate course of action. The people of the Tsukumo organization have already given up their lives. Those guys have angered Haruko, I will absolutely annihilate them with just one finger.”

Of course, she ignored his retort.

By the way, his sister has been repeatedly saying these extreme remarks for some time now. At a height of 165 cm; with a small face, long legs and arms, and a body with good proportions; her figure properly dressed in a leaf patterned kimono gave off a very adult like feel. Yet she was 11 years old and still in the fifth grade.

Because of this, her attitude could have been passed off as just a young girl being somewhat of a brocon when she was young—but now that his sister has grown to be somewhat adult like, he could not just pass it off with a slight laugh.

“However,” Haruko says while stirring the contents inside her cup with a teaspoon. “I have thrown out the possibility that the Tsukumo organization would harm Onii-

sama.”

“Oh? Why is that?”

“Other than Onii-sama, for the role of being a ‘sacrifice’, there is no other candidate it seems.” Bringing the cup to her mouth, “Rather, from what I have investigated, the organization has made every effort to try and protect Onii-sama. It is reasonable that they would place such high value on something that they have no replacement for. As long as you are one of the reasons for the world’s protection, they will not be able to take actions against you.”

“Fumu. I see.”

“Besides, the way that they tried to get mother and father to give you up was quite roundabout. I think that from the impatient way they used to pursue you, had never thought of the possibility of Onii-sama getting hurt—at least that’s what I think.”

“In reality, however, it went one step before a homicide occurred.”

“But didn’t it end as just an attempt? The timing was almost as if it was planned.”

“Agreed.”

“In other words, that’s how it is. Not just this, but everything is playing out within the hands of the Tsukumo organization.” Fuuuu~, Haruko makes a long sigh. “They are such a troublesome group of people. The knowledge of its existence doesn’t appear anywhere around the world, not even at the level of being an urban legend, yet its roots spread far and wide. Their range of influence extends terrifyingly wide. It’s like mold that continues to grow no matter how much you clean it. No matter the effort that you put to stop one part of it, it would definitely turn up somewhere else again.”

“Oh well—. There’s nothing we can really do about that.”

“Agh! Just thinking about it makes me feel annoyed! Why did it have to be Onii-sama!? How is the Tsukumo organization so annoyingly strong!? Can they please not hinder the starting point of my Love Road with Onii-sama!?”

“Now now, calm down. Would you like some tea instead?”

“Yes please! If it’s tea from Onii-sama, never mind ten cups I could even drink a

hundred cups!" Haruko's expression quickly became a happy one.

Her being easy to handle is a good thing, but it is often Yuuki that triggers her nerves.

"By the way, Onii-sama," She said while moving her fingers along the edge of the cup,

"What kind of person is god?"

"Hmm—? Let me see."

"After all, it is the person that your life was given to. As your younger sister, I think it is necessary for me to know."

"No well, I'm not really supposed to say anything. It's like an obligation of confidentiality?"

"There shouldn't be anything in this world that you are required to hide from siblings who are bound by blood though?"

"Now now. You shouldn't really bother your Onii-chan too much?"

Listening to her brother, Haruko continued sipping her tea. Then, with a big smile, "She's a very beautiful person, isn't she? This person called Kanaruzawa Sekai."

"...How do you know about that?"

"Oh yeah that's right. According to rumors brought to me by the wind, the other day, Onii-sama got married. Isn't that a strange story? For such an important thing, why did I hear it from someone other than Onii-sama?"

"Y-yeah. I wonder why. It really is strange."

"Onii-sama" Haruko glared at Yuuki, "There are many things that I would like to ask about, but I will only ask one thing right now. Currently, I feel that it is hard for me to bear full the burden of Onii-sama has to say."

"Y-yeah, I see... Well, what do you want to hear?"

"Me or Kanaruzawa Sekai. Who has the larger chest?" She asked with a serious look.

Yuuki thought about it for about ten seconds before answering. "Don't worry about it. You are the taller one?"

"I see. So, she is the bigger one." Her glare became stronger. "Onii-sama."

"Yes?"

"Onii-sama has always preferred woman with a larger chest haven't you?"

"Nono that isn't true. I have the reputation of having a wide strike-zone. The size of the chest doesn't matter too much?"

"Hmmm, I see, a wide strike-zone, huh. After all, you are fine marrying an old woman who has lived for more than 1000 years."

"Like I was saying, the circumstances—"

"Then it's decided. The Tsukumo organization and of course, the goddess are all my enemies."

"Please. Calm down. Cool your head."

"I am calm and I am thinking clearly. I am making an extremely cool and accurate judgement."

There was no other saving grace.

Now that it's come this, there was no way to stop her. Once she has decided, she will never back down, because Haruko has developed adult skills at a young age.

"Anyways," His sister said with a serious face. "Be careful, Onii-sama? The Tsukumo organization is a very dangerous opponent. Dangerous... and ominous. I know nothing about them... this is the first time that this has ever happened to me."

"You're right. I get it."

"So, for now, I cannot interfere with them. Please take care of yourself until I am able to handle them."

"Alright. I'll do so."

Although he said that, he wasn't too worried. Ever since he has been called back by god, rather than feeling some sort of danger, the days have felt calm and gentle. He couldn't actually see the effects from the Tsukumo organization after all. His compatibility with the maid, Chiyo-san, was not good, but she was generally harmless. Regarding Kanaruzawa Sekai, rather than being a harmless existence she was someone that made him laugh.

(It's as if I'm part of an army when there is no war.) Yuuki thought.

If so, everything was fine.

Even for the navy or the special forces, there's no reason for them until an emergency actually happens. For now, Yuuki's priority was making Kanaruzawa Sekai happy. Rather than being part of the military, he was conveniently free.

Of course, it would be different when the 'time comes'.

If that happened, Yuuki would curse at everything.

He reluctantly served as the 'sacrifice' because he was cornered by the Tsukumo organization, and all his other choices were taken away, but that wasn't all. It was because he was told that he would be protecting the world—because he was told that he played a role in that, he could accept his unreasonable fate.

(But well, for now, everything is fine?)

The opponent to beat.

An obstacle to overcome.

As long as neither is present, the military will continue to leech off taxes.

As long as everything was peaceful, Yuuki intended to relax to his heart's content.

If wishes could come true, if hope existed.

He wished for it to be like this until his life was extinguished.

---

**TL Note:**

1. Her first name is Sekai (セカイ), which means the world in Japanese.
2. He's taking this time to basically go through her name and pick it out for how unusual it is. Her last name is written as Kanaruzawa (神鳴沢). The first character would be god/goddess. The second meaning somewhere along the lines of crying out or like ringing. While the last character means like a valley, or something like that. This results in some grand literal meaning which he explains right here.
3. I'm pretty sure this is the name of some brand that sells things for homes.
4. She's basically talking about taking each other's virginity at a young age, before all of the Tsukumo organization stuff happened. Extreme, but... that's how she is.

# Chapter 4

## 第四章



**The solution that the goddess had thought of was simple.**

**If things went wrong because the goddess disappeared, then she would just need to make a new one!**

**To the goddess, this was a nice idea.**

**As such, the goddess began looking for a replacement.**

**Of course, the goddess looked for her replacement among humans. Since the ones that would be troubled by the goddess's disappearance would be humans, it made sense that humans would be responsible for the problem.**

**Among the humans, the goddess picked out one person.**

**Sorry, but would you mind becoming my replacement in protecting the peace of this world?**

**To the chosen person, goddess's words was felt like having water poured into one's ears while sleeping <sup>[1]</sup>, but to everyone else, it was a saving grace. "For the sake of the world. For the sake of mankind. I am sorry, but can I leave it to you." Due to the expectations of those around, the chosen person stopped hesitating, and decided to accept the role.**

**However, there was one problem in having a replacement for the goddess.**

**The goddess was largely omnipotent, but every once in a while, there were things that even she could not do. For instance, she couldn't create an existence that was at the same level as herself.**

**Being the goddess's replacement didn't mean that they could do everything like the goddess herself.**

**"Is there a way to fix this?" The goddess thought.**

**And so, the goddess decided to grant the her replacement one extra power.**

**It was one day in February, after New Year's and Valentine's Day had passed. As usual,**

Yuuki headed to the mansion, and opened the door to Sekai's room.

"...Oh? That's unusual."

She was asleep. The owner of the room was sitting in a chair, her neck leaned back, eyes closed, and chest rising and falling with her breathing.

"Also... it stinks of alcohol."

This was also very unusual. The smell of alcohol reached everywhere in the room, and every time a breath was taken the smell would stimulate the deepest parts of his nose. When taking note of his surroundings, many empty bottles could be seen lined up.

Rum.

Tequila.

Brandy.

Whiskey.

It was a parade of various types of hard alcohol. Judging by how the bottles weren't cleaned up, the contents were probably emptied in a short amount of time. If you drank that much, your eyes would probably end up spinning.

"Yuuki?"

Pachiri.

Sekai woke up.

"Why are you here? Today shouldn't be a day that you—no." She muttered with her eyes still half open. It didn't seem like she was sleep talking, her speaking was also normal. Seems like she wasn't sleeping earlier and just had her eyes closed, or else, she was someone that just wakes up quickly. "Welcome. It's fine if you make yourself at home."

"Yeah. I will. For now, though, I'll cleanup? At least, the empty bottles over there."

"No. It's fine." She says, as she poured whiskey into an empty glass.

The amber liquid shimmered mysteriously against the setting sun as it moved around. In one gulp, she drank it all.

“Hey hey. Isn’t your pacing a little too fast?”

“Are you my guardian or something?”

“I’m asking because I’m worried for you.”

“It’s useless to worry. A goddess’s body won’t be harmed by something like this.”

“Didn’t you say that you were old and small?”

“...” Sekai had nothing to say in response to Yuuki’s teasing.

“Sekai?”

“What is it?”

“Did something bad happen?”

“It is not something you need to worry about.”

“So, something did happen.”

“...” Sekai stayed silent as she took a sip from her glass. She then gave a somewhat bitter smile as she clapped her cheeks lightly, “It seems that you have a misunderstanding, Yuuki. No, it’s probably my fault. I probably gave you a reason to make that misunderstanding.”

“...?”

“Yuuki. Something bad happened, of course. But it was something inevitable.” She chewed on a chocolate cigarette and poured more alcohol down her throat, “After all, this world is filled with things I don’t like. I have no free will, I don’t get a bonus, nor do I have any freedom. Adding on to that, there is no one to support me, nor is there someone to take my place.”

“That’s a violation of the Labor Standards Act.”

“I know, right? Also, life isn’t like games, there is no end to it, you know? Indeed, doesn’t it seem to be something inevitable to you?”

“And that’s why your drinking?”

“That is correct. I must drink no matter what.” Saying that she gives him a wink.

It was innocent and lovable, a smile that would be worth protecting with your life. Yuuki’s heart throbbed.

However, he noticed.

He felt something that made him think that Sekai’s smile was forced. It wasn’t something bad, but it was obvious that she was trying to deceive, as if trying to hide something—like a mischievous child that acts nicely in front of other adults. That was what her smile felt like.

(Chie. What’s with her?) Yuuki was annoyed.

Sekai was hiding something, or rather, it was something else—ever since he met her, somewhere in his heart, an ominous feeling had piled up in his heart, building up until it was about to burst. Now, that irritation began to surface,

“That’s right. I’ll go ahead and make myself at home now.” Yuuki sat down on his own personal chair. “Actually, even if you asked me to leave, I wouldn’t be able to. The time for me to visit is always set, so I would be chased back by a certain maid, who really doesn’t hold back. I can’t really say that today is because of that, though.”

“I-in other words, it’s that, isn’t it? The manifestation of morning urges? A straightforward request of wanting my body? No, but taking that step might be a little too early don’t you think?”

“Don’t try to hide it from me, Sekai.” Yuuki didn’t play along with the goddess’s act. “Though, I haven’t really been listening carefully until now. Please tell me properly. I’ll listen.”

“...What is it exactly that you want to hear?”

“For one,” He stretched out his body, “I know that you like alcohol. After all, I’ve already seen you drinking many times with a satisfied expression. But you know, I didn’t know that you were such a heavy drinker. Well, I guess this is how you are normally, but it just so happened that I came on a day that you didn’t expect, and your normally hidden self was revealed to me.”

“Yeah. That was completely my failure.” Sekai complained with a bitter expression. “I usually refrain from drinking this much around you, but I just felt like it today. Knowing that I drink so much, you’re going to take back your proposal. Well, well, hiding things from you is so bothersome.”

“Don’t underestimate me idiot.” Yuuki wouldn’t accept it. “I have already been through some harsh times. As such, I can observe people pretty well. I won’t be fooled by such an obvious lie.”

“I haven’t told you a lie.”

“But you haven’t told the full truth either.”

“...What are dissatisfied with? What is it exactly that you want to know?”

“Everything of course, everything. The things you are hiding, the things you hid. All of it.”

“Then I’ll answer you.” She bit down on her chocolate cigarette and swallowed it in one gulp. Yuuki was like a curious child, burning their hand, as they tried to enter in on an adult conversation—that was what this seemed like. “As long as I can talk about it, I will. But if I don’t want to, I won’t talk about it. That is my decision, Yuuki.”

“Aren’t we a married couple?”

“It still hasn’t been long since we got married.”

“That’s true, but I don’t want our relationship to be superficial.”

“That’s a difference in perspective. Your way of thinking is different from me, who has lived for ten times longer than you have. The relationship that we have, isn’t even at the level where we can talk about whether it’s deep or shallow.”

Each argument that was made matched with another. The dialogue between Yuuki and

Sekai promptly escalated.

“Then, let’s break up.” Yuuki went as far as to say that. “A divorce I say, a divorce. After all, we got married for no real reason. There isn’t anything that forces us to be married, there shouldn’t be any problem.”

Technically speaking, it was true.

However, as soon as it came out of his mouth, Yuuki regretted it. Still, he couldn’t stop. He knew or he believed that she would end up crying. And nothing feels worse for a guy than making a girl cry.

But despite that, he wanted to find out.

Yuuki had a feeling of frustration. An unfamiliar and impatient feeling of wanting to know something.

He had to know now, or else. Rather, he believed that it was essential for him to know.

“...Then.”

But. The goddess’s reaction was different from what Yuuki had predicted.

“Then, after today, your duty is over.” She said.

She gave a bitter laugh as she continued. “I will not stop you from leaving. You should forget everything and return to your original life. That’s what I believe it should’ve been like from the start.”

It was like a married couple who had been together for decades choosing to divorce after having a serious discussion. That’s what her face looked like right now.

He wanted to match her reply. However, as expected, he could not give an immediate reaction.

“...Idiot.” Squeezing out his voice, Yuuki broke his silence. “Even if we accept it, the people around us will not. The Tsukumo organization won’t, Chiyo-san won’t. Most of all, I won’t.”

After saying that, he stood from his seat and left the room. He had a troubled smile on

his face, even until the last moment as he closed the door to the goddess's room.

†

"A fight is it? Such youth." Without him needing to find her, Chiyo came calling from the other side. There she was, the maid, Chiyo-san, sweeping the front steps with a broom, "Between girls and guys, I feel that fights are common. However, do not trouble my mistress's heart too much, I hope you will keep that in mind."

"...Were you peeking on us?"

"It is as clear as the sound from a ringing bell. If you make a face like that, it is very clear to see."

She returned a smile.

As usual, she was a difficult maid to deal with, but he still took up the offer when she asked "How about a cup of tea?". There were still many things that Yuuki wanted to talk about.

"You won't hear anything by trying to talk to me. I have nothing to say." While brewing some Assam tea, Chiyo-san continued to speak, "However, I might accommodate slightly if you have something you want to talk about. Now, go on, tell me all you want about your youthful problems. Vent to me your dissatisfaction, your complaints, or even your desires. I will listen to it all."

"...Somehow, I feel like you're being rude to me."

"That's just your own imagination."

"Actually, there's a lot I want to talk about. It's not exactly too clear, you know? About the circumstances that I have been placed in."

"It is sometimes said that ignorance is bliss."

"Aren't I supposed to be a pretty important person? Yet, why am I handled so carelessly?"

"I am currently treating you according to your role, or at least that's the intent."

He couldn't respond to that. But he couldn't stay silent either.

"I would like to ask about the Tsukumo organization."

"Go ahead. Just listening comes at no cost."

"What exactly are they? Since when have they existed?"

"I wonder, who knows."

"What type of power do they hold? Who is the boss, where is their base, and how far is their reach in this world?"

"I will leave that to your imagination."

"What is the goal of the Tsukumo organization?"

"It is their job to make sure the world and the goddess lives for as long as possible. I think that I have told you many times already."

There was no gap to take advantage of. He couldn't even find a small crack in her guard.

Of course, Yuuki had done his own investigations to the extent of his own abilities. He ended up doing investigations about Chiyo, the maid who he only knew the name of, about who exactly is she.

However, he found out nothing.

She doesn't give out any important information on her own. It's as if what he was looking for doesn't exist, her history, her origin, everything is unknown. Even her age was uncertain. If possible, he would've wanted to negotiate with her after finding one of her weaknesses, but...

"Chiyo-san, how long has it been since you started looking after Sekai?"

"I wonder, who knows."

"How long has passed since you started on your current job?"

"I leave it up to your imagination."

“By the way, where do you come from?”

“Hmmm, I wonder where.”

“How about a favorite food, do you have one?”

“I enjoy eating youkan and uirou <sup>[2]</sup>, why?”

“So, you will answer properly when asked something like that... and that seems very old-fashioned, feels like an old woman.”

“If you’re looking for a fight, I’ll buy it, you know?”

“Even if I die, I wouldn’t sell one <sup>[3]</sup>.”

Chiyo-san poured some more tea.

Yuuki took a sip after thanking her. It really is tasty. The tea that this maid makes is definitely top class.

Drinking the tea, it reminded him of his sister who also makes good tea. A duel between Haruko and Chiyo-san. Just imagining it made his heart burn. In a way, it would be a dream match. Meaning the nightmare type of dream of course.

“Chiyo-san, you manage the whole entire mansion, right?”

“That is correct, what about it?”

“Just you, right?”

“Yes.”

“Also, do you live here?”

“Yes.”

“So, the people living in the mansion, it’s you and Sekai, just the two of you?”

“Yes”

“The cleaning and the cooking, you do all that yourself?”

“Yeah, by myself.”

“Must be pretty troublesome, right? I would assume that it takes a lot of effort.”

“This extent of effort isn’t enough to tire me.”

“You really care a lot about Sekai.”

“Of course. Because she is someone who is irreplaceable.”

“Chiyo-san, what is your position within the Tsukumo organization?”

“I leave that to your imagination.”

So, she will respond to small talk. However, when it comes to important matters, she kept a tight lip. This maid really won’t give away anything.

She seems to be a really shrewd person, while she pretends to respond to his small talk, she tries to fulfill her own goals—in other words, even as Yuuki was searching for something from her, she was searching for something from him.

No, rather than looking for something, it was more like she was giving him a diagnosis. It was as if she was a psychiatrist, working with her patient in a roundabout way, but slowly and steadily working towards the core of the problem. It was obvious that this maid was trying to measure something. This “something” within Yuuki.

“Now then. I suppose you’ve finished venting by now.” After drinking her second cup of tea, Chiyo-san stood up. “Thank you for fulfilling your role today. You can come back another day. When the time comes, I will expect more from you.”

“I understand. It’s just like how it normally is.”

Nodding, Yuuki stood up from his seat. He didn’t gain anything today, and it seems he was going to leave empty handed again.

For this meeting, the days that passed before he was called was by no means short.

Meanwhile, he still couldn’t believe what had happened, but before he chose to marry

the goddess, he was prepared at the time for his life to end, yet now, it had become a long-term war. He promised to make Kanaruzawa Sekai happy, and yet now, unlike what he expected, he spent his life in a somewhat calm manner.

But something will happen. When the time comes, he must be prepared for it.

Besides preparing for this long-term battle, he needed to look for a chance. The goddess and the maid both have tight lips, but he will definitely find a way to grab them by their tail. They were definitely both hiding something from him. To keep Yuuki from knowing, they have stubbornly shut their mouths. One day, Yuuki will break open their mouths and expose the truth under the white sun, and then, Yuuki can finally gain a better position—

“Soon, this world will be destroyed.” Chiyo-san said abruptly.

She said it just before he left the mansion, after parting with her at the entrance way and saying, “See you next time”.

“Not far into the future, maybe in about a year or to—no, even earlier, maybe a month, or even today, this world will disappear.”

“...Eh?”

“Well then, see you again. I wish you well.”

“Eh. Wait. Eh?” Yuuki blinks a few times.

Chiyo-san didn’t blink as she took in Yuuki’s reaction.

It didn’t look like she was lying. Still, he had to confirm.

“Really?”

“Yes”

“The world will be destroyed? No way, but how? Why?”

“Why don’t you try guessing how right now, because even I can’t say for sure.” Chiyo-san shrugs her shoulders.

“Well then, the world will probably not be engulfed by a nuclear war. Nor will a large meteor from the sky. Most likely, the Tsukumo organization has probably predicted that when the moment comes, this planet, this universe, will just disappear.”

“...You mean to say that it would be like having the power suddenly cut from your computer?”

“Yes. I think that’s pretty close to what I mean.”

Chiyo-san nodded.

Yuuki didn’t know everything. However, he has experienced more than the usual youth of his age. Therefore, he could feel it with by intuition.

What she said was not a lie, nor was she trying to fool him. This maid was just simply and directly conveying the inevitable truth.

That’s why he asked. “And, is she—Kanaruzawa Sekai, possibly involved in some way?”

“...” She answered with silence. She didn’t have her usual smile as she just kept her mouth shut. Then, after a short time, she gave a bow. “Well then, see you next time. Have a good day.”

...As usual, she showed no weaknesses.

After saying all she needed to say, Chiyo-san closed the gate, and the front door was locked. He could not pursue any further.

After hearing something like that, Yuuki really didn’t know what he should do. Under the cold winter sky, before the truth that was spelled out in front of him, before the truth that he wanted to know, Yuuki had no choice but to stand up and walk away—

†

“With that said, the world will be destroyed soon.”

“Fuun. Is that so. Hee~” Hearing Yuuki’s story, Koiwai Kurumi nods.

They were at Murakumo Private High School, Year 2 Class A’s classroom. After their classmates left after school, the two class representatives were busy sorting printouts

for the class,

“Nono. Wait a second. Yuuki-kun?” Bishi. She made the form of a knife with her right hand, while she half smiled, “Even if your trying to fool around, try to be reasonable. Or else even I can’t give a proper reaction, right?”

“Yeah, I know, right? Normally, that would be the case.”

“Even something on the level of like, I suddenly got married, I could possibly believe you. But if you say something like the world is going to be destroyed? I can only give you a blank look. A blank look, you hear me.”

“Is that so. No, of course it’s like that...”

“First of all, if the world really was going to be destroyed, Yuuki-kun, you wouldn’t be here right now, right? You wouldn’t be normally coming to school and putting together these printouts. Wouldn’t you have better stuff to do?”

“You are absolutely correct. This isn’t the time to be doing something like this.” Her logic was correct. Yuuki wished whole-heartedly that he could support Kurumi’s statements. “But, you know? It’s not that I’m not doing anything, it’s that I have nothing to do at the moment.”

“Oh? Did you want some life counseling? Am I being relied upon, perhaps?”

“Well, yeah... It is true that I don’t have anyone else I can confide in...”

“Leave it to me.” Pon, she struck her chest with a fist, “After all, it is my job as a class representative to be relied upon during times like these.”

“I’m also a class representative technically, but... for the moment, please listen to my story. It’ll help me collect my thoughts by talking to someone.”

“Yeah. I’ll listen to you.”

“Also, if you feel the urge to give a retort, please let it go.”

“I understand.”

“It’s fine if you continue working. You don’t have to listen so seriously.”

“The prologue to this seems super long.”

“Anyways, it seems that this world really will be destroyed.” Facing the person sitting across from him, Yuuki begins to speak. “Moreover, it seems that that day could even be tomorrow. After I was told such a thing, I was really troubled.”

“Yeah yeah. I see~”

“By the way, this world it seems, is protected by a single goddess. Because she is good at doing her job, we are able to live our current daily lives.”

“I see. She’s pretty amazing, this goddess.”

“Well, at least for about the past 1000 years, she has been the one protecting this world.”

“1000 years? That’s pretty amazing.”

“I know, right? I don’t know what she does or how though. However, in some unknown corner of the world, where no one else knows, she works on alone.” Yuuki held his hand to his cheek and looks at the scenery outside the window.

Outside, the soccer club and baseball club, without caring about the wind or the cold, could be seen enjoying their youthful lives.

“...Well, that doesn’t seem good~”

“Yeah, it’s bad.”

Kurumi tilted her head. “What is?”

“The goddess. I mean, the world is going to be destroyed. That means, something bad happened to the goddess if she cannot protect the world like she has been—if you think about it, that would be the first thing that comes to mind.”

“Fuun. What bad thing could’ve happened.”

“I have no idea. I wish someone would tell me.”

“I see. Well, nothing you can do about it then.”

"I guess... It's hard to interfere personally with it."

"Then?" Once again, Kurumi tilted her head. "Is it alright for you to not do anything? I mean, the world is going to be destroyed."

"No. I don't think that's alright."

"Then, do you know what you are going to do?"

"Yeah. To tell you the truth, I'm already doing something. What I have to do is well, it's something that I have been doing secretly for a while now."

"I see. You are doing something."

"By the way, everything that has been said is to be kept a secret, okay? I'm only telling you this because it's you, Koiwai-san"

"Yees" Bishi, she gave a salute, "I have a rough idea of what has been said, Yuuki-kun. It sounds like quite the problem."

"It is. It is very much a big problem."

"But isn't that alright? After all, you are doing what you can at least from what I can see. For whatever happens next, it's all up to your luck I think. It's like you've done all you can, and all you can do now is wait for fate to decide the rest."

"That's true... I guess, in the end, that is what it's going to be like."

"Then, have you reached a decision?"

"Yup. I guess you could say that."

"Was I of use to you?" Mufun, Kurumi pushes out her chest.

Yuuki gave a bitter smile, thanking her ironically with a quick "Thanks".

"If I could say one thing though, Yuuki-kun. I don't think you need to think about it too much."

"What do you mean?"

“Well, Yuuki-kun, aren’t you in a somewhat special position? So, it’s likely that more special events will occur. From now on, a pattern like something that happened then would probably happen again.” They returned their attention to sorting out the printouts, “However, to the best of my knowledge, Yuuki-kun isn’t very adept at handling the current situation. Therefore, you would probably regret it if you failed, but you would feel even worse if you just let it go.”

“You think so...?”

“So, rest easy and try your best. Most likely, what you are doing right now, what you are trying to do, is a result of you trying your hardest. Please fight on with all your heart. I’m cheering for you.”

“..”

Yuuki quietly stared at the class representative across from him. Koiwai Kurumi accepted his gaze with a smile.

“You know?”

“What is it, Yuuki-kun?”

“Koiwai-san, you’re a nice girl, you know?”

“Right?”

“Thank you, really. It made me feel a lot better.”

“I’ll not only cheer you on, but also help you if you need it?”

“Thank you... If something comes up I’ll be relying on you.”

“By the way,” She smiled and puffed out her cheeks. Class representative, Koiwai Kurumi said this, “This is for a girl, right?”

“...Why would you think that <sup>[4]</sup>?”

“Moreover, she’s probably quite a beauty.”

“No, that’s why I ask. Why would you say that?”

“Well well~” Puhaa, she exhaled, “You’re just always surrounded by a bunch of beauties. Well, it can’t be helped I guess.”

“...Somehow, that wording seems to imply something.”

“By the way, I’m also included when I’m talking about you being surrounded by beautiful people.”

“Haa”

“Hey, Yuuki-kun. You messed up with the printouts over there. Do your job better.”

Being so strictly reprimanded, Yuuki hurriedly went back to work. The sound of a baseball being hit by a metal bat rung out in the background.

†

That was what he intended from the start. However, being pushed by Koiwai Kurumi, Yuuki renewed his determination with even more vigor.

What about his determination?

What is it that Kirishima Yuuki needs to do?

There is only one thing—that is to do as much as possible for Kanaruzawa Sekai. To protect her, to support her, to give his all in preserving her smile.

It was when he was five. When that mysterious man, with his fake smile, pointed his family into their ill-fated destiny, only unreasonable things have continued to come, even now, he is just being thrown about by the circumstances around him—struggling against the well thought out plans that others had decided for him.

However, inside all of that, he finally found a ray of light.

She was godly, dazzlingly beautiful—she had a habit of crying easily, and yet the world is protected by this one sole goddess. To Yuuki, she was his salvation, his reason for living.

That was why, he relied on it.

He desperately clung to it.

Now that he had grabbed on, he could never let go.

Determination.

What he had to do.

He would bet everything, Yuuki felt that putting his whole life on the line would be the only way to fulfill his goal.

He believed that he could be forgiven for what he was going to do.

And now that he had thought this through, he finally felt relief.

...

.....

.....

“No, no. What am I even saying?” Returning to reality, he reprimanded himself.

Recently this sort of pattern has repeated quite often. Strangely, his heart has been in disarray, panicking, a feeling of wanting to do something, without knowing what it is—a feeling that had caused him frustration several times now.

It’s as if he was part of a never-ending nightmare that he could not wake up from.

“...What am I saying. Really.”

Bachin! Using both hands, he hit his cheeks, trying giving himself energy. This isn’t the time to be misled by some unfamiliar feeling.

First, he needed to face reality.

Step by step, slowly but surely. He must move forward.

“I was expecting you.”

On that day, it was March.

After a long time, Yuuki was called back to the goddess’s mansion.

“Please come in. I’ll show you the way.”

As usual, Chiyo-san lead him around after giving a bow. Although there were many clouds today, the weather was still nice. In the garden, thrushes were calling out and playing, while the plum blossoms stood in the background, glaringly white to the eyes.

“Umm” Yuuki asked while he chased behind the maid. “How is she? Sekai.”

“How is she? As in?”

“Is she doing well or... is she in an alright condition? I want to know about things like that.”

“Please confirm that yourself. She is alright.”

“Well, if possible, I would like to get some information ahead of time.”

Without any response, Chiyo-san continued ahead. After which Yuuki followed behind while scratching his head.

“Go on by yourself.” She repeated herself. “It would probably be better for you to check for yourself.”

“Well... I guess so.” Yuuki grudgingly accepted her response.

The awkwardness between him and Sekai is his own responsibility. Rather, as a man, he couldn’t let Chiyo-san help him.

“The things that you will be seeing with your own eyes are not an illusion; rather, they are the reason I called you here today.”

“Haa, I see. Is that so?”

Responding to Chiyo-san's words, Yuuki looked up at the sky. Then, after replying, he realized. Being led around by Chiyo-san without being told a thing is normal. However, it was different from their normal course.

That is, they were not heading towards the usual room: Kanaruzawa Sekai's room which is always overflowing with cigars and alcohol and has a somewhat lazy, stale, and stuffy feel to it. They were on their way to a different place.

"...Umm? Chiyo-san?"

"..."

Straight ahead lead to Sekai's room. The maid, however, took a left down a corridor, through a break in the wall, and went downstairs into an underground area.

After first stepping into the area, there were several rooms just like on the first floor, however, they did not stop and continued on. In front, stood a single huge door that looked down upon visitors.

The door opened slowly creaked open. It revealed a tennis court sized space, with nothing but a stormy landscape.

"What is this place?"

"..."

Chiyo-san walked into the center of the hall. Afterwards, Yuuki follows her accordingly towards the center. The hall was completely empty. There was only the slightly damp air and the dim lights.

"...Ummm?"

Chiyo-san faced Yuuki, who was confused. "How my mistress keeps the world from being destroyed. Do you want to know?"

"Of course. I want to know."

"Very well, I will explain it so that even a fool can understand." With a cool expression Chiyo-san continued on to explain, "In this world, there is much good, but there is also a lot of evil. If left alone, one or the other will increase too much, losing the balance

within the world. Keeping the balance is my mistress's job—sounds simple, right? In short, it's like being in charge of garbage disposal. If there are positive things, there are also negative things. Cleaning up those negative things and taking on those burdens... no one wants to be that person, but it is something that must be done. The world that the goddess made was made in that way. In this way, the world can be kept on the positive side of things. Do you understand?"

"...I think so."

"What you are going to be seeing is the sight of my mistress busying herself with this so-called garbage disposal." With that said, Chiyo-san took a bow. A very deep bow. As if she was bowing towards her own master. "Have a safe trip. I hope nothing happens."

"Wait a moment, wait a moment." Yuuki gave a bitter smile, "Have a safe trip? Where are you sending me exactly? I don't exactly understand where this is going? It seems like this is only half of the—"

The next moment. The world around him completely changed.

"Eh?"

It was a world with nothing in it. At the same time, everything was in it.

There was depth to the end of this space. Black and white coexisted without mixing into grey. He couldn't hear anything, yet it was overflowing with sounds. The end was in sight yet he could not see what was right in front of him.

Whatever it was, he had never seen it before.

Yet he felt familiarity at the same time.

There was no time and no space here. Perhaps, it was just a place, and that was the only meaning it held.

Of course, it was not the place Kirishima Yuuki was at until earlier.

Just what is going on?

He didn't need to think about it. It was because of Chiyo-san. That sly maid had to have done something. And as a result, Yuuki was now standing in a place where he did not

know left from right.

What is the meaning of this?

I didn't hear anything about this? Why was I thrown into such a place?

*"How my mistress keeps the world from being destroyed. Do you want to know?"* Her voice echoed.

It transcended time and space as it seemed like it was being whispered into his ears.

That's right. It's definitely for that.

Kanaruzawa Sekai, that lonely goddess—the truth of a girl that lacked in many places, while sharp in weird places, and sometimes had eyes that seemed to be looking at another world. The moment he realized that he had come here to confirm it with his own eyes, a head came flying by.

Goron, gorori.

In a world with and without sound, he definitely heard it within his ears.

It was Sekai.

Kanaruzawa Sekai.

The person that had accepted his sudden proposal without any question, who to Yuuki was probably his lifetime partner; her head, with a lump from the top of her neck. With bloodless skin, with an expression that seemed to give up on everything, with eyes that seemed transparent as they looked elsewhere, it was rolling around in front of Yuuki.

“\_\_\_\_\_”

Time had stopped in a world without time.

He didn't understand. Why? Why is this happening? What is she doing here? Did she die? Is that why her head is separated from her body? Why? Why, why, why, exactly what, what is going on?

His body moved during this confusion. While calling out her name, Yuuki runs over, entangling his legs. An unpleasant sweat came out, his mouth quickly dried up, and as he tried to pick up the pitiful Sekai with tears and snot running down his face, her head disappeared in front of his eyes.

(Eh?)

It disappeared.

Sekai's head disappeared from in front of his eyes. Without a trace. Without even leaving a single drop of blood.

Spread out around Yuuki, there was only the place with nothing and everything in it at the same time.

(...Was I seeing a dream?)

No, that's wrong.

It was certainly a world that was hard to grasp, and unclear what was true or not. However, Yuuki saw it. He felt it. Kanaruzawa Sekai's death and her miserable appearance. Such despair could not have been a dream. His back trembled just remembering it, the sight of all the internal organs spread out in front of him as it flew.

Beki.

Boki.

Gushari.

She flew, while making bone piercing sounds, like manuscript paper being crumpled and thrown away after being written incorrectly.

( ———What)

It was not far from where he was looking.

It came flying at a tremendous speed without any warning, but he did not doubt it. Covered in blood and barely keeping its original shape was Kanaruzawa Sekai, and without thinking, Yuuki rushed ahead.

He crawled over, ran to her, and lifted her cut up figure while calling out her name. Again and again. The red flesh, the white surface of bone, and the pink streaks of muscle were all exposed and were all still beautiful, but as expected, she was dead. It was just a dead body, a lump of flesh.

Realizing the inevitable truth, Yuuki's arms and legs trembled as much as they would when he laughs, as he tried to squeeze out a scream from the depths of his stomach. Then, Sekai disappeared.

( ———!?)

It happened again.

The same as before.

It was clearly real, and there was a clear feeling—the lukewarm feeling from the internal organs, the warmth from the blood that covered his hands were definitely still there. Yet it felt like a dream or hallucination that was not like reality, as she disappeared like a haze.

(...What is this? Really, what is this?)

Yuuki stood stunned in silence.

And then, he finally realized.

In this chaotic place without time or space, it was there. Various forms of death were spread out everywhere.

In some places, there were sharp knives, cutting her into two.

In some places, she was crushed by giant rocks.

In some places, she was stripped of her flesh little by little from her toes to the top of her head.

In some places, she drowned. In some places, she burned. In some places, she suffered while foaming at the mouth. Or her skin was peeled off, or whole body whole body pierced, twisted, blood bleeding from her eyes, mouth, and ears—

It was the city of death.

There were thousands and thousands of different forms of death and the people caught in that nightmare, all of them were Kanaruzawa Sekai.

(Hell?)

That was the first word that came to mind.

It had to be the truth. If this sight was not called hell, then what else could you possibly call hell?

However, there were a few things that were strange.

One. The only person suffering in this place was Kanaruzawa Sekai alone.

One. The fact that Kanaruwaza Sekai, that harmless animal-like existence, could never commit a crime that would warrant such suffering.

One. Why is this god-like existence currently here like this? Rather shouldn't she be the one that casts someone into hell for punishment?

He couldn't understand anything at all.

He couldn't do anything at all.

What could he do?

In this world which was completely unknown, where unbearable atrocities were committed, where the person that he reaches out to with his hands and feet disappear. What exactly could he do?

There was only one think that Yuuki could do.

Overcome his impatience and helplessness by calling out from the bottom of his stomach. He was unsure whether it would reach inside this dreamlike world. However, it had to reach. The her who is in the situation, at least, at least his voice.

He called.

He called. Again and again, he called.

As if he was throwing up blood, squeezing it out from the bottom of his stomach. Again, again, Sekai, Sekai, Sekai, SekaiSekaiSekaiSekai,

“Sekai!!”

—It reached

He felt some sort of response.

It was a world without sound, and yet Yuuki’s scream definitely reached.

But, shortly thereafter. He regretted it from the bottom of his heart.

“...ki?”

Sekai looked his way.

All of them at once.

The thousands and thousands that were experiencing death, the thousands and thousands of Sekais, all at the same time. They turned their eyes towards Yuuki.

The thousands and thousands of pairs of red eyes all stared at the stunned Yuuki.

He felt a vague uneasiness.

It was as if he witnessed a scene that he would never be forgiven for seeing—

Or like a criminal that was exposed in the middle of the night—

“Is that... Yuuki?”

On one hand, Sekai was struggling.

On the other hand, she was shivering from fear.

Or shame.

Or maybe anger.

Doubt.

Bewilderment.

Unrest.

Grief.

Her, or maybe their eyes contained glimpses of all these emotions—and all those emotions only spoke one thing.

Kirishima Yuuki shouldn't be here.

Kirishima Yuuki shouldn't be here.

Don't look.

Don't look. Don't look don't look don't look. Please, why are you here when you should not be here, why—?

Tears overflowed.

Tears came spilling out from the thousands and thousands of pairs of red eyes.

Even after she was given death, even after experiencing all this pain, she didn't show any tears. Even though she had completely accepted the absurdity of the whole situation. Now, tears filled her eyes.

Yuuki felt the blood leave his body.

He was too late to notice it. That he was now looking at something that he should never have been allowed to see. That he had stepped into a place where he should never have stepped foot into.

And most likely, he had robbed her of her last bit of support. Sekai had lost her last thin bit of support as it was crushed into oblivion. He had taken down the sanctuary that the girl had barely kept up on her own.

Don't look.

Don't come.

Don't get closer.

The countless wishes overwhelm Yuuki.

Don't look.

Don't come.

Don't come closer.

Stay oblivious to all of this.

Don't remember that you saw me like this.

Please, please.

I beg of you.

Yuuki.

Yuuki...!

“———”

Yuuki trembled. He had clearly committed a sin. There is no way for him to redeem himself, no way to compensate, as the world begins to destroy Sekai again. Blood, bone, and flesh, scattered in thousands of different ways and filled his sight.

Of course, he reached out his hands.

He struggled over and over.

However, his hands and legs could never reach Sekai, as she continued to be slaughtered in front of him, until he was exhausted. Still, he tried to struggle, desperate to grab on to even a thin straw until he realized that there was nothing he could do and he screamed out like a strangled chicken before suddenly returning to reality.

“Welcome back.” She was bowing deeply. They were in a tennis court sized space, with nothing but a stormy landscape. The maid, Chiyo-san, gave a brilliant gesture that seemed to come straight out of a textbook.

“How was it? The world over there.” She said.

“...” Yuuki couldn’t respond with anything.

His heart was pounding. Sweat covered his whole body. An uncomfortable fatigue that he could not bear overcomes Yuuki.

“...That was...” He somehow squeezed out words with his trembling tongue. “Was that reality? Did that really happen? Sekai, she, like that...”

“No, that was not reality. Reality is even worse.” Chiyo said that lightly. “That was just a form that appeared before your eyes, a form that was seen because it was the only way a human could possibly understand it. What truly happens there, no one really understands. Most likely, if a normal human being were to see what actually happens there, they would instantly tremble just from seeing it.”

“...I don’t understand what you mean. What is that?”

“I completely agree with you, Yuuki. Even to me, it’s completely unknown. I only know that that is how my mistress cleanses the “inconveniences of the world”. In other words, it may be good to say that it’s like cleaning dirt. Anyways, thanks to my mistress fulfilling her duties, this world can remain in equilibrium.”

“She can endure that. All of it, really?”

“Yeah, she can. Almost every day. Except for the days where you are here at the mansion. That is the duty that has fallen to her as a god-like existence.”

“...”

He couldn’t say any more than that.

His anger didn’t rise.

Neither did sadness come.

Yuuki could only fall to the cold floor while stunned.

All he had to do was imagine it.

If Sekai was skinned from the tips of her toes up and cut into pieces before dying. Or she dies from a burning stake gouged through her mouth, like a skewered a fish.

Yuuki didn't want to experience that way of dying even once. *"You will be dying like that in the future"* if that was prophesied. And there was no way he could avoid this destiny. He would probably hang himself on the spot from the fear of it all. What if he had to repeat this every single day?

It could be nothing but hell.

He felt a kind of pity or sympathy for her, so much that he wanted to embrace her no matter how rude it would be.

"Please..." Then, Yuuki said. "Please let me see her."

"What are you going to do after meeting her?"

"I don't know. I just want to meet and talk to her."

"What will talking to her do?"

"What will it do!? There's no way that would do anything!? Of course I understand that!"

He grits his teeth. He bit down so hard that he bled. Then, he took a deep breath to prepare himself.

"Still, even so. I want to see her. I want to meet and talk to her. Please." Yuuki begs.

"I see. I understand what you are trying to say." Despite that, Chiyo-san was cool and calm. "But, that's probably impossible. Please pull back for today."

"...Dammit!? Why!?"

"If you have to ask..." She stayed calm till the end, "It's because you have almost fallen unconscious. You don't seem to be aware of it yourself though."

“...?”

That was his limit.

The energy was pulled out from his upper body by some mysterious force.

Then, he saw the ceiling. The reason for that, he realized, was because he had now fallen on his back and at the same time he heard a voice speak, “I suppose this should be expected given that his living body was exposed to that side. At least he isn’t foaming at the mouth on the ground.”

That was the last thing he heard as Yuuki’s consciousness sank beneath the mud.

---

### TL Note:

1. This is a figure of speech that just means that what the goddess talking to him/her was a very surprising event to him/her.
2. These are both traditional Japanese desserts. Youkan is made from red bean paste, agar, and sugar. It looks like this:



3. Uirou is made from rice flour and sugar and is much like mochi. It looks something like this:



4. This is based off a Japanese figure of speech, 喧嘩を売ってのか. Which when translated literally is asking whether you're selling a fight, but it's just asking whether or not you're looking for a fight.
5. The gender might be obvious from an English perspective, but keep in mind that the Japanese phrase for god or goddess (神様) is completely gender neutral, much like a lot of Japanese as pronouns like him or her, he or she, are never used. That's why this actually seems like a surprise.

# Chapter 5

第五章



**The young man that the goddess chose to become the new god was a real hero.**

**Everyone around the young man praised him, because everyone knew what the new god would have to do in order to fulfill his duty.**

**He had accepted a duty where he would have to suffer harshly forever as long as the world continued to exist. He felt that if the world was saved, because he took on that suffering, then that would be good.**

**Everyone around him expressed tears at the young man's determination and expressed their feelings of gratitude.**

**However, there was one person who couldn't accept the young man's decision.**

**That's right. It was the person who the young man had promised to marry.**

It was a little after the middle of March when he was called back again to the goddess's mansion.

An out of season snow was dancing in the air. The weather was going to get colder around this time of year, so Yuuki had thought of doing what he was planning on doing earlier than planned.

Chiyo-san who greeted him at the front door had a smile like usual. It seemed like she had completely forgotten about what happened last time, or as if she was a completely different person as she didn't show any difference in emotion even when she saw Yuuki.

However, Yuuki did not concern himself with her.

The person that he should be fighting was not this maid.

"...You came, Yuuki."

After entering the usual room, the owner of the room was reading with a chocolate cigarette in one hand.

"Welcome. Feel free to make yourself at home."

Yuuki used just his sight to observe the inside of the room.

The smell of alcohol filled the room. A book that he didn't really know was on her lap. A bottle of alcohol was placed on the desk, where a whiskey glass sat filled with amber-colored liquid. In other words, everything was like normal.

Bring it on.

"Are you planning on acting like nothing happened?"

He started with a jab.

"I've already heard most of it from Chiyo-san. I heard, and I also saw it in person. Your work, I know what it is now."

"...That was unnecessary."

Sekai listlessly clicked her tongue.

"Originally, you should not have known about it, nor was it something you needed to know. Yet, Chiyo did something that unnecessary... what exactly is she thinking?"

Annoyed, she swallowed her chocolate cigarette.

"You should forget it. Nothing good will happen if you remember it."

"No, I don't want to."

"I don't intend to say that I completely understand what you are thinking."

She made a sigh,

"However, I can imagine what you are thinking of doing from now on. That's why, you should stop. There's nothing you can do."

"We won't know unless I try."

"Then, why don't you tell me what you can possibly do?"

She sneered.

“I am a goddess. It is my job to protect this world and keep things as it should be. There is no other person who can accept this role. And, “that way”, is the only way for me to accomplish my work. In such a situation, what can anybody do?”

“Who knows. We won’t know unless we try after all.”

“If I throw away my role, this world will disappear, you know? You, your family, and even I will disappear without a trace. Will you still do it despite that?”

“That isn’t great. But the situation right now is also not so good, you know?”

“It is unavoidable.”

“Is it really like that?”

The wind outside grew. Gradually, the size of each grain of snow became larger. The clouds were thick so that even though it was noon, it seemed like it was dusk. Unfortunately, the current situation was not good.

The things planned ahead will surely be difficult.

“Well, this talk will get us nowhere.”

Looking fed up, Sekai smoked a cigar.

“I thought you were a man with more prudence. A man that was more of an adult than his age would suggest. But it seems that I was mistaken.”

“Heeh. That’s a coincidence.”

Yuuki didn’t lose to her.

He flared his nose and said,

“I was also mistaken about you. You see, I thought you were a better child.”

“A better child... you say?”

“It’s great that you have the logic of an adult. It’s great that you can properly add and subtract, but something in this world can’t be accounted for based on just obligations.

If you're subject to something unfair you should say "No". Clearly and in a loud voice. That's what a proper person would say as long as they're living with their own pride and dignity."

" ... "

"Don't be mistaken? It's not like I can't do normal calculations."

In the name of protecting this world, this star—because Yuuki was told that he was the only one who could fulfill this role, he accepted such an unreasonable fate.

Their levels was different, but their positions were the same.

Kirishima Yuuki and Kanaruzawa Sekai.

"If things are accounted for based only on obligations, there's only one conclusion that can be made. If you are wrapped up in long and hard problem, the you can only rely on the shadow of large trees <sup>[1]</sup>."

"If that's the case, then isn't it fine?"

Sekai refuted him.

Looking at him from the corner of her eyes, she groaned,

"Even based on your own logic earlier, wouldn't the conclusion still be the same. If you properly take everything into account there is only one answer, right? It's not better to be a good child, but rather, it's better to properly act like an adult."

"No, that's wrong."

"What is? Exactly what part of that is wrong?"

Sekai bites her nails in frustration.

Yuuki proudly lifted his chest and announced.

"It's because you are my wife. That's why it's wrong."

" ... "

“We somehow got married for some random reason. However, we have still become a couple. I am the husband, and you are the wife. And, this creature that is called a husband, is one where, at the moment of marriage lives only for the sake of protecting his wife. Whatever it is, his highest priority is to protect his wife. That’s how this world his.”

“That’s stupid. That reasoning is only for humans.”

“Do you mean to say that because you are a goddess it doesn’t matter?”

“That’s right.”

“No, that’s also wrong. You are a human, Sekai. You are more like a human than anyone I know. You’re a crybaby and just a little bit pretentious, yet you still try hard to fulfill your own role. Despite being a crybaby, you don’t cry or say a single word of complaint for all of this. If that isn’t human, then what is?”

Keh, he spoke venomously.

With his middle finger standing, he spat out.

“That’s why I’ll say this. I’ll say it proudly with my chest out. The current situation is wrong. It’s so wrong that it makes me want to throw up. Pushing such a troublesome job on you, without even being aware of the fact that they are doing that and just living their lives obliviously every day, you don’t find anything wrong with that?”

“You’ve said enough already!”

Don!

Sekai pounds the table with her fist.

“Are you trying to reject my duty? That’s the same as insulting me. Until now, I’ve held pride as I continued to do my duty. It’s been so long that I’ve even forgotten my own name doing this. If you are trying to throw mud on all that history, even if it’s you, I won’t forgive you...!”

“Insult you? Throw mud on it all? There’s no way that’s the case.”

He shook his head,

“I really do think that everything you’ve done is amazing. It’s fine to take pride in it. It’s even enough to make me want to bow down to you. I have a lot of respect for you.”

“If that’s the case—!”

“But this and that are a completely different story.”

Yuuki continued to firmly make his assertions.

“That’s why I say this. I say that what’s wrong is wrong. Even if no one else says so, I will say it. That’s why I can say things that other people won’t in this case.”

“You, what exactly are you—”

“Quit being a goddess.”

He boldly declared it.

“Don’t endure it all by yourself. Such a world is wrong. So quit it. It’s time to cut things off with the people who live without knowing anything.”

Just like he declared, he proudly held his chest high.

However, those words, those—

“You big idiot...!”

Sekai’s curse almost turned into a scream.

She grabbed at her hair and hit the table multiple times,

“It’s fine if you just think that! However, actually saying it is another thing! That’s definitely not good! You know just by thinking about it that Chiyo-san, the Tsukumo organization, they won’t stay silent about this, right? Even before I—”

“Be quiet. Of course I know.”

He quickly knocks down Sekai's defense.

"Listen to this. I say all of this knowing all of that, That when the time comes for you to quit your job, millions and millions of people, this whole world, will disappear without a trace. This includes the family and friends who take care of me. I understand all of that."

"If that's the case, then why!?"

"Hey hey. Understand it already. I've already said it multiple times, right? It's because we are married. You are the wife. I am the husband. Besides this, what else is needed?"

Saying that, Yuuki took a step forward. Having the distance between them shorten, Sekai shook in surprise. However, Yuuki was merciless. He didn't pull back one bit.

"So, tell me."

He walked until he was directly in front of her. Her red eyes, wet from anxiety were held still and captured. Captured and not let go.

"If you wish it, I will do anything. Anything at all. I'm definitely always going to be your ally. No matter what it is, I'll devote my strength to you. That's why, you don't have to endure it anymore—especially not alone. Please."

"..."

"If I am someone who you trust, then please, rely on me. Please tell me your real feelings. Please cry and scream and show off your unhindered appearance. After all, no matter what happens, I'll always be with you. I promise."

That's why.

Please tell me.

Whatever decision you make, I've already made up my mind.

Tell me with an uncensored voice.

With no lie or deception, just tell me the truth—

“...Just what I’ve remembered, it’s already passed a hundred times.”

How much time has passed?

At the end of it all, Sekai looked downwards.

She looked down and clenched both her hands on her lap.

Then, she squeezed out her voice.

“A long time has passed since I became a goddess. Useless things and precious things, I’ve already forgotten a lot. Still, I remember vaguely. A hundred times, two hundred times, or three hundred times—anyways, it’s been so many times that I’ve already stopped counting.”

“Times for what?”

“The amount of times that I’ve tried to end my life.”

“ ... ”

“That’s about the amount of times that I have actually tried. The number of times that I wanted to die, wanted to disappear, I do not know the amount of times that I have just thought that. I mean, that’s about all I think about every day... however, I didn’t die. I’m a goddess after all. There’s no way I could die from just that.”

“ ... ”

“Haha, it’s laughable, right? Of course I wouldn’t be able to die so easily. I have to fulfill an important role after all. There was no way I would die just by hanging myself or stabbing my heart. Still, despite all of it, I didn’t give up. I tried over and over again to kill myself, but I couldn’t actually die. Then, during all of this, something within me seemed break.”

It was blood curdling confession.

She stared at her hands which were pure white from how tight she was clenching her hands. She gave herself a scornful smile, blamed herself, and looked down upon herself. Yuuki recalled her words.

She smoked enough to shower in its smoke, drunk enough alcohol to make it seem endless—however she won't die from that, she said. She said a lie. It's not that she won't die.

She couldn't die.

It's true. The moment Kanaruzawa Sekai dies, would also be the moment when the world ends. There's no way she would be made in a way where she could die easily.

"My everyday duty is really harsh, you know?"

Sekai lifted the ends of her lips slightly,

"It isn't a thing that humans can put into words. It is truly hopeless. Dark, uncomfortable, stuffy, and things of unfamiliar nature enter my body as they take up every corner of my body and rip my heart to shreds. After I'm done, I always end up scratching my body with my own two hands. Scratch until I'm covered in blood. If I don't I wouldn't be able to endure it."

"Ah. Of course."

"But you know, Yuuki? Ever since I met you, I stopped thinking about trying to kill myself. There were even times where I would think, 'As if I can die'. You were a ray of light to me. You being there for me saved me. Really. It's really strange. I was completely taken by you, who I had met for the first time and only really known for a short time."

Sekai made a smile.

It was not a sarcastic smile. But it was only for a moment as she continued.

"However, Yuuki, it became painful for me."

She muttered as she looked down and spread out her two hands.

"Will I remain like this forever? From now on, will I have to continue to protect the world? Forever, alone, without anyone knowing. Surrounded by cigars and alcohol, must I live as long as this world continues?"

She shook her head.

I do not want to believe it, I can't believe it, she seemed to say.

"I would be great to not think any further of it. I wouldn't need to feel any unnecessary suffering... but that's not possible. I will continue being me, continue being a god, and willingly fulfill my duties from day to day. From now on, forever."

Haha, she laughed.

"Of course, I'm prepared for it. It was a destiny that I chose to take on in the first place after all. However, it's painful. Sad. Thinking that these days will continue on like this makes me unable to endure it."

"Ah. Of course."

"Yuuki. There's something I want to say to those that live without knowing any of this. Who do you think makes sure that you can continue to live on? I want them to know a just a part of the other side of this world and just to give them a piece of my mind. However, I end up hating that part of myself. In the end, it's just envy, it's just a grudge. It isn't something that they asked me to do, but something I accepted myself after all—aaah, what am I saying now?"

She shook her head again.

Again and again.

It was as if she was trying to shake off her hesitation.

Or, as if she was trying to find a way to proceed.

"That's right. It's what I wished for. That's why I can't complain. I completely understand that, but still I end up thinking, I don't like this. I don't like the pain. I don't want to live trembling every day. I don't want to live being afraid of tomorrow. Most importantly, I don't want to shoulder everything myself anymore. That's why, that's why—"

She covered her face. Tears spilled out from in between the gaps of both her hands. Then, she squeezed it out in a hoarse voice. Without wiping her red eyes that had become even redder. This is what she said.

"Please save me. Yuuki."

...Her voice was as small and thin as the cry of a mosquito. To tell the truth, it barely even reached Yuuki's ears. However, Yuuki smiled.

He smiled and nodded.

If you asked him why, he would answer like this. It was because, more than anything else, what reached him was Kanaruzawa Sekai's unmistakably true intentions.

"Of course I would."

He then answered like this.

"Making you happy is my job."

He squatted down to Sekai's knees and looked into her eyes.

"Are you prepared?"

She smiled and cried while she asked in response.

"How about you, are you ready?"

"Well, for the most part."

"With such half-baked intentions it'll quickly be game and set, you know?"

"I understand. Our opponent is those people after all."

"I won't be any help to you, you know? I'm just a person tasked to protect a world she knows nothing about after all."

"Yeah. That's not a problem."

"Rather, I'll probably be a hindrance, you know? I will surely be holding you back."

"That's nothing."

"Moreover..."

She lowered her eyelids and diverted her gaze,

“Moreover, I already... can’t walk by myself, you know?”

“I already know.”

Yuuki quickly nodded



Sekai's eyes were colored in surprise.

"You knew?"

"Yeah. I knew."

"Since when?"

"Almost from the start."

"How did you notice? I thought I hid it pretty well."

"It's easy to understand just by looking. No matter how much of a shut-in or a goddess you are, it's still weird if you think about it. I know that your body is more beat down than it looks. That's why I can say that."

"..."

"That's why, Sekai. I already know all of it, you see. Don't worry. I really do know it all—that's why you should leave it to me. Everything, all of it."

"Got it."

Gokuri, Sekai nodded.

She nodded multiple times.

"I'll leave everything to you. So make sure to do everything perfectly."

"Understood."

Yuuki made a playful bow.

Then, he stood up and slowly picked Sekai up.

"Close your eyes, hold your breath, and hold on as much as you can. The first is the most important."

Sekai once again nodded as she did what she was told.

Then, Yuuki ran.

He crossed the room, jumped out the glass window into the garden, and rushed into the grey world of dancing snow. He ran through, seeing the red camellias out of the corner of his eye. He ran like the wind. Sekai, surprised by his speed wrapped her arms around his body as tightly as she could. Yuuki held her tightly in response to her delicate power. He passed through the gate and went out into the streets.

Almost simultaneously.

A moving car prepared in advance came screeching to a halt in front of the gate with perfect timing. They jumped into the car, and it started moving without waiting for the door to close.

Yuuki gave out a few orders, to which the driver responded with a silent nod. The engine made a loud noise as they were steered towards the high-rises of the city.

†

*An hour later.*

Sekai and Yuuki were inside a residential house at the edge of Tokyo's 24 wards.

"I-I thought I would die..."

Sekai groaned as she was carried off in the truck by Yuuki.

"From what I can tell, we switched to a different car five times... the speed of the cars were all fast, and they all shook so much..."

"It would be great if you could let that go for just a bit."

Yuuki said with a bitter smile,

"They would probably be searching all along the main roads, so it served as a kind of countermeasure. Now, though, maybe things will go alright."

"I also had my clothes taken from me in the middle of all that..."

"Yeah. We were afraid there would be a tracking device attached. Anyways, thanks for

bearing with it.”

Yuuki thanked her.

An hour had passed, just one hour. However, it was the longest hour that Yuuki had ever experienced.

To the point of it being annoying, they had used every means possible to avoid being seen by cameras placed around the city, avoid surveillance from satellite imaging, and avoid being seen by people walking around.

Their vehicle was changed many times, inside tunnels, underground parking lots, and narrow alleyways between buildings.

They tried to cover their tracks walking through crowded main streets, and even dared to travel through the sewers filled with rats. A number of hackers were also hired to give out fake information in order to shift the movement of the police and firefighters as much as possible. He used his money and connections to its fullest potential.

Thanks to that, they were able to arrive her safely. Their pursuers were nowhere to be seen.

When it was confirmed that Yuuki and Sekai had gotten off, the truck drove off and disappeared to who knows where. The veil of night had fallen and the sky was already dark.

“Still, we don’t have the luxury to rest, you know?”

The garage to the house opened, as he warned Sekai, who had a pale face.

“This place will quickly be discovered. That’s why, we should run as far away as possible before we are discovered.”

There was one bike prepared within the garage. It was a CB400 Super Four <sup>[1]</sup>.

There were also a number of winter jackets and pochettes with daily necessities prepared.

“Go on, get changed. We’ll be leaving immediately.”

“Uuu... we’re going to be moving again... no breaks at all...”

“Just think of it like a roller coaster ride at an amusement park. If you think about it that way, it’ll feel fun right?”

“Uuu...”

“You don’t like that?”

“...It’s not like that.”

Furufuru, Sekai shakes her head.

“I don’t dislike it. As long as I’m together with you I’ll go anywhere.”

“That’s a good answer.”

She quickly got changed and straddled the bike.

The snow steadily drew strength from his legs as it covered the sky in white. The snow was originally helpful for avoiding surveillance, but from here on out, it will be disadvantageous. It would draw the heat from their bodies and put the road into a dangerous condition.

Still, they will leave.

They must move on.

They could not back down now.

“This will be a little bit of a longer trip, okay? Can you endure it?”

“Yeah. I can.”

“Hold on tight. Don’t ever let go.”

“Got it. I definitely won’t let go.”

It was pretty weak, but Sekai grabbed on with everything she could.

Vroom!

The four-cylinder engine roared. Then, they headed off into the snowy night heading towards the west.

“Is it cold?”

“It’s alright.”

Sekai’s voice came in through the radio headset of his helmet as she was sitting in the back seat.

“It’s warm enough. I’m stuck super close to you after all.”

“That’s good. Feel free to cling on even more. The feeling of your chest is great after all.”

“Yuuki!?”

A scream came up from behind him.

Hahaha, Yuuki laughed—in reality, it was just thick clothes on more thick clothing, with disposable warmers here and there. There really wasn’t very much of a sensation at all.

The bike passed through the city area and entered a mountain pass. It carefully cleared the road that wound left and right. Every time the bike tilted to make a turn it seemed to slip a little bit on the asphalt, causing a few cries of “Wha~” and “Hya~” to come up from the back seat.

Slowly the number of cries began to decrease, and in return Sekai began to speak to him. She had probably started getting used to the situation.

“Yuuki.”

“Hmm?”

“This is the first time I’ve seen so many different types of scenery like this. There’s mountains, forests, rivers—riding on a bike like this, all the sceneries seem to flow together.”

“If it was a more clear day, then it would look even more beautiful.”

“Yuuki. Are we able to get away like this?”

“Who knows. I wonder.”

“However, for the moment, would you say that we have gotten away?”

“Well, I did play much of my hand. Besides us, there are also a number of dummies running around as a distraction. Routes on trains, routes on busses, routes on ships, and routes on planes... of course, there are others that are taking routes that have them stay in Tokyo.”

“Regardless, it would be the combination of a highschool boy and a girl with white hair.”

“Yeah. They were also made to look alike you know? They even have the correct identification.”

“Haha. That’s some pretty good preparation.”

“Didn’t I say? Don’t underestimate a rich boy like me.”

Passing through the mountain pass they saw the sea; the sight of a black sea bordered by a cityline. In the bay that entered into the Pacific Ocean, the lights emitted by fishing boats dotted the sea.

“Wha!”

Sekai cheered,

“Yahoo!”

Yuuki gave his own cheer without losing to her.

“It’s the sea, Sekai!”

“Umu, it’s the sea! But it’s completely black!”

“With this, we’re free!”

“That’s right! We’re free!”

“To hell with the Tsukumo organization!”

“That’s right! To hell with the Tsukumo organization!”

“They couldn’t chase us down! No matter what happens we would be able to easily escape from them! In the end, they’re only this much!”

“That’s right that’s right!”

“By the way, I think that Chiyo-san has a scary smile and I hate it!”

“Such a coincidence! I also don’t like her!”

“Hahahah”

“Ahahahah”

The sounds of their laughter were drowned out by the sound of the wind and the roaring engine. Raising their fists, and expressing their discontent through their mouths, they continued to insult the world and those around them.

With the two of them like that, the driver in the parallel lane had to look at them twice with a strange face. It wasn’t that they didn’t notice him. In fact, they gave him a peace sign in return. The driver panicked and stepped on the brake as if trying to get away from them.

“Ahahah! That person is a cowardly man!”

“I know, right! He really is quite a chicken!”

They laughed alone together.

It was fun.

It truly was fun.

The world, and everything in the world was currently owned by the two of them. If this wasn’t fun, then what else could be.

They dropped by a vending machine along the way. He bought two cans of cans of warm coffee. This would be the first time that Sekai has had it.

“Drink it. It’ll make your body warm.”

“Umu. Thank you.”

After Yuuki opened the lid and handed her the can, she blew on it.

Fuu fuu.

Fuu fuu.

Again and again.

“You had a cat’s tongue I see.”

“Fun. Is there anything wrong with that?”

“No, not really. I just thought it was cute.”

“...You really say things like that carelessly.”

“Your face is red, Sekai.”

“That’s not true. My face has not turned red.”

“Alright then, hurry up and drink it. It’ll be bad when it’s cold.”

Shortly after she was told that, Sekai put the can to her mouth.

“Well? Is it good?”

“...It has a very interesting taste.”

“Is it bad?”

“If I had to say it, then yes, it is.”

“Being unable to savor this taste, it shows that you are still an amateur.”

“Fun. What’s wrong with being an amateur.”

Sekai sulked.

Seeing that, Yuuki chuckled, kukuku.

“...But, yeah.”

After tasting the coffee a bit more, Sekai said.

“It’s not tasty, but the taste really sinks into your body. Umu. It’s really good. It’s really warm, and really good.”

“Right?”

“It’s the most beautiful liquid that I have every put in my mouth so far. But more than anything, I’m happy that I’m drinking this with you, Yuuki. I’m really happy because of that.”

Saying that, Sekai gave a expression of complete satisfaction. That smile was very beautiful and attractive, and this time, it was Yuuki’s turn to have his face turn red.

†

On the way, they rested at a bus stop in some remote area.

It was only a small hut with one fluorescent light. It barely had a roof and walls to hide from the rain and wind. However, for the two of them, that was enough.

They sat down on the bench. There was no sign of anyone at the bus stop this late into the night. The houses nearby were also sparse and lacked the presence of a person. The only thing moving in their vision was the dancing snowflakes falling down from the sky.

“Are you cold?”

“It’s alright. It’s warm.”

Maybe it was because of the snow accumulating, but the surroundings were quiet. Only the fluorescent light above them made the smallest of sounds.

“Is it alright if I ask you something, Sekai?”

“Hmmm?”

“It’s about your job.”

The things that Yuuki saw with his eyes that day.

He was led by Chiyo-san and entered the goddess’s world, and there, he finally understood the meaning in Kanaruzawa Sekai’s existence. He saw the sight her destroying her own body, and using her body to sustain the world.

At the time, Sekai repeatedly shouted.

Don’t look.

You can’t look.

She shouted again and again.

It seemed desperate and painful. Was it because he committed a taboo by learning the truth of the world?

That was a possibility. But it wasn’t just that. Sekai seemed more desperate than that. It wasn’t that Yuuki had committed a taboo, she was afraid of something more than that.

“What was that?”

Yuuki asked as he looked at the falling snow.

“Why could you not let me see it? Why was I not allowed to look?”

“If I had to say it,”

Her voice seemed to be surprised at why I asked such a thing. Sekai answered like this.

“It’s obvious. It’s because you’ll become sick.”

Fuu, she sighs,

“Yuuki, that was something that a normal human would not be able to endure. I wouldn’t have been surprised if your spirit were to collapse the moment you saw it. Rather, that’s how it should be normally. There was no way you should have returned safely. That’s what it means to experience something beyond human reasoning.”

She was still indignant, but Sekai showed a face of relief.

“For you to still be fine after seeing that, it’s good.”

“...”

Yuuki couldn’t say anything. In that situation, she was thinking of me. Even though she was taking on things that would feel painful just by watching.

“Sekai.”

“Hmm?”

“You’re a fool.”

“Muu!? That’s not true. I’m not a fool. You always say this! Isn’t the person that calls another a fool, the real fool?”

Sekai’s movements stopped.

She became stiff like a small animal, but she able to resolve her nervousness and got close to Yuuki by herself. While looking watching over the snow, they were like this for a long time.

For a long time, they felt each other’s warmth and heartbeat.

†

Entering late into the night, they got onto the highway.

As they headed west, the snow became thinner and they even began to see places

where there was no snow. The engine of the CB400 that they were on was also in good condition.

“The way going forward is still long, but keep it up, Sekai.”

“Yeah. I’ll try.”

He didn’t want her to suffer for long. With that in mind, Yuuki strongly grabbed the accelerator.

Crossing Shizuoka, pass through Nagoya, Osaka flew by on their right, and following along the Sanyou Highway, the sea of Setouchi spread out in front of them. Ten hours on the road. There was the destination that they were seeking.

Through the cold wind of midwinter, Yuuki had driven the bike without almost no break on their journey. Not a single cry or complaint came from his mouth. Further, further and further—with just those thoughts, the two of them continued to move on.

It was early morning the next day. The two of them arrived at a small port town.

When they arrived, there was a fishing boat arranged beforehand anchored there. Mixed in with the ships going out to fish, the two of them embarked into the dark sea. Their body heat, which had been stolen by the long journey, was relieved by the warm miso soup that the old boatman made. While Sekai and Yuuk snuggled up to each others, they tasted the warm liquid together.

“Yuuki.”

“Hmm?”

“It’s tasty.”

“Yeah. It’s good.”

Slowly and steadily, the two of them drank the miso soup.

The dark ocean that seemed like spilled ink had fishing boats spread around as it had just entered fishing season.

The snow had already stopped. The splash of the sea danced every time the bowhead

hit a wave. Every time, it would tickle the knows with the scent of salt. There was the odor of heavy oil from the shaking engine. And the eastern sky slowly whitened little by little.

With her eyes half closed, Sekai entrusted her body to Yuuki's shoulder. Most likely, Yuuki would never forget this scenery. From now on it would be burned into his eyes, and never disappear from the back of his eyelids as he sleeps.

†

Eventually, the ship arrived at an island. It was a small uninhabited island less than 1000 meters around.

Past the pier a sandy beach spread out before them. Beyond that, there was a small hut with its roof fallen and no one living it. Inside the hut there were supplies prepared in advance. Supplies for survival like tents, sleeping bags, and cooking tools. There were many clothes and enough water and food.

"...Fufu. Your preparations are thorough, Yuuki."

"If I couldn't at least prepare this much, I wouldn't have taken you and ran."

Sekai got into the sleeping bag while he gathered the firewood and started a fire.

The bonfire burned. He put water into the pot and placed it above the fire. He could hear a thin voice coming from the sleeping bag.

"...Yuuki."

"Yeah. I'm currently boiling the water. That way we can drink some good coffee in a bit. It'll be way better than the one from the vending machine, you know? Or do you want some miso soup like earlier? If it's the instant kind, I can make it right now."

"Yuuki."

"Be quiet and sleep. It's fine to take it easy and rest."

Sekai became quiet.

Yuuki didn't turn to her.

“At the very least we can stay for three or four months. If it’s longer maybe half a year.”

Yuuki said while taking care of the bonfire.

“We’re trying to live here for about as long as that. Please relax.”

“...Yeah. I see.”

“Besides this place, there are a number of other hiding spots prepared. When it comes to it, you’ll see them. Also, there are observers placed in places around here and in the port town just in case. If it seems bad, they’ll immediately let us know.”

“Yeah. I see.”

“When the Tsukumo organization can’t find us, and their surveillance becomes a little looser—from then on is the real part, you know? We can head overseas. Right now, that route is being restricted, so it’s not possible at the moment.”

“Yeah.”

“Once we get out of Japan, that’ll be it. We won’t be caught easily. At that time, we will definitely be free. We can really do anything we want. Ah, there’s no need to worry about daily necessities, you know? We have the money after all, and even more hiding spots prepared.”

Pachiri.

Pachiri.

The dry firewood makes sound as it burns.

“My little sister is an amazing person, so I’ll be leaving my family to her. For me, well, I’m their son, so I can ask them for some remittance. Man, I’m glad to be born into such a rich family. It is a little suspicious whether my little sister will accept it though... haha, she’s a serious brocon you see. As an older brother, I don’t know if I should be troubled or happy—it’s quite complicated.”

The sound of the waves.

The sound of the wind.

The smoke rises and tickles his nose.

“If we can afford it, let’s go on a trip. We’ll soon be able to go anywhere we want. You’ve already worked hard for so long already, that’s why it’s alright to get a little bit of a reward. We can go on a trip on the bike like today, or even it’s not that it’s fine. Anyways, let’s go somewhere. Let’s do that.”

He opened the coffee lid. He also cut the seal on the instant miso.

“Going around on a bus to various places is also fun, you know? You can’t go far, but in return you can look at things in more detail. A train is fine too. So-called railroad travel. I’ve kind of always wanted to do it. Getting on one of those sleeper trains, and looking out of the window at the scenery while eating inside the food car. It looked really good when I saw it on TV.”

He also cut the green tea bag. He also poured some of the whiskey which he had prepared for the goddess into a paper cup.

“We can even go to the sea. We only got to see a completely dark ocean today, so why don’t we head further south and go to a more beautiful ocean. It’s great, you know? It’s the so-called emerald ocean. The sky is sky blue with pure white clouds, and the sandy beach is pure white from end to end. There’s also a stupid number of fish swimming in the coral reefs.”

Chocolate.

An assortment of nuts.

Canned fish, meat, and fruits.

Anything that could be prepared was prepared. Yuuki prepared so many different things, that it looked like he was trying to pray for something [2].

“Going to the mountain is also great. Mountains are great you know? The green color is beautiful, and even rivers that flow seem to turn green in color. It would be great to camp in a place like that. Having a barbeque, looking at the stars through a telescope at night... well, we’re planning on camping on this island here to the point where you might hate it. I guess you wouldn’t want to do it after we got off this island. Hahaha.”

“Yuuki.”

“Yeah, the coffee is just about ready, alright? The miso soup as well just needs some hot water put into it for it to be done. Which one do you want? If you want we can do both.”

“It was a short time but thank you.”

Yuuki’s hands stopped.

However his hands quickly started moving again.

“What about food? We have various types, you know? Well, it’s not like a convenience store where anything and everything is lined up, but we prepared quite a variety—”

“There’s already almost no time. What I want to say, a favor, will you listen to it?”

“...”

Yuuki stopped his hands. This time, he couldn’t start moving his hands again.

“Yuuki.”

He could hear his voice behind him. It was thin and weak. But it reached his ears clearly.

“Please don’t blame anyone. Chiyo, the Tsukumo organization—it isn’t like anyone is in the wrong. This couldn’t have been helped. At least, I have accepted it. That’s why, Yuuki, please. I don’t want you to face your anger towards anyone.”

“...I see. If you say so, then there’s nothing that can be done.”

“One more thing, is it alright to ask for one more favor?”

“Of course. Bring it on.”

“Can you hold on to my hand.”

“...”

“It’s about time for me to lose feeling in my hand. Your warmth, I would like to feel it while I still have the chance.”

“Yeah. That’s easy.”

He held her hand as she wished. Still, he kept his back to her.

“When I think about it, it wasn’t that bad of a life, Yuuki.”

“ ... ”

“I have lived for so long that I’ve already forgotten why I was living, for what that I became a goddess, but, at the very end, I got a reward. Fufu, it was fun. The time from when I met you was really fun.”

“ ... ”

“Well, I was selfish to the end, but please forgive me for that. I have been working for this long, I can at least receive some form of retirement money.”

“ ... ”

“If I had to say, I think I already received my retirement money... Yuuki, you were just that. Chiyo pulling us together like this, I think that’s what it was for. It’s just that, but I think it’s enough... fufu, I was being helped by Chiyo till the end—”

“Sekai.”

Yuuki strengthened the grip on her hand and asked. No matter how hard he held it down, his voice shook.

“You weren’t short and old, were you?”

“ ... ”

There was no answer.

In exchange, Sekai said something else.

“Yuuki, can I ask for one more thing?”

“You’ve only been asking for things for a while now.”

“Well, that’s fine isn’t it.”

“Bring it on. I’ll listen to anything.”

“Turn and face this way, and look into my eyes.”

“...”

His words were stuck.

A long time after she asked, Yuuki replied.

“Do I have to face that way?”

“Yes. You must face this way.”

“No matter what?”

“No matter what.”

Yuuki scratched his head. Then, he hit both of his cheeks and turned to face her.

There was a beautiful person.

Even at a time like this, her beauty didn’t lose to anyone, in fact, it was shining more vividly than ever—then, she said.

“Yuuki, I love you.”

She said it with a smile.

She said it with a very clear voice.

He held back for bit.

He held back and then smiled.

“What are you crying about?”

“I’m crying? Am I really crying?”

“You don’t even know yourself.”

“Ah...”

Her eyes were shining.

Tears spilled out.



“It’s true. I am crying.”

Sekai smiled slightly,

“I’ve already cried so many times now. I’ve cried so many times I can’t count how many. And in the end, I didn’t even notice it myself. How weird.”

Tightly, she held onto Yuuki’s hand. Then she said it again, “How weird”, and then smiled.

That became her last words.

Kanaruzawa Sekai has died.

She won’t grip his hand anymore.

She won’t open her mouth anymore.

“Nono.”

Yuuki shook his head.

“This... this is weird.”

Heheh, he laughed. He asked while laughing.

“With this timing? This suddenly? Nono. There’s no way. There’s no way that’s possible. No way.”

No one could answer him. The freezing wind blew before dawn.

“Wake up, Sekai. There’s still more from now on, right? There’s so many more fun things from now on. You’ve been holding back for all this time after all. That’s why it’s fine if you do this. You have to do this. Come on.”

There was no one to answer him. Only the sound of the waves on the beach reached him.

“Come on, you were super lively until just now. I won’t believe it, you know? It’s weird after all. At least, drink the coffee. Even the miso soup. I prepared it all for you. It’ll all go to waste now. What do with this now?”

There was no one to answer him.

A flock of seabirds crossed the sky while flapping their wings.

Of course, he knew. He noticed it.

During the long journey away from Tokyo, her coloring had gotten worse, her speaking had also grown less and less. Most likely, she was an existence that couldn’t live after leaving that mansion. While understanding all that, she allowed him to bring her here.

She died.

Her breathing had stopped.

She passed away smoothly.

She won’t ever return.

“———!”

Yuuki raised his fist. He beat the ground.

“Dammit! Dammit! Dammit, this can’t be happening! Why did it become like this!?”

He hit it. His bones creaked. His blood scattered.

“She tried! She tried all by herself all this time! In the end, this is what she gets for trying so hard with everything she had! She shouldered everything herself! Because of that, she died!? It’s not funny, it really isn’t! Is it really fine like this!? Is it!?”

Dammit. Damn everything.

More than anything, Yuuki blamed himself who could only take her and run.

He hit.

He screamed.

His struggling and screams had no meaning. The only things that Yuuki could do held no meaning. He was less than trash.

“Why!?”

He scattered his tears and screamed until his throat dried out.

“Why did it become like this!? Why, how did it become like this!? Was there any other way to do this!? Was there another road!? If there was, I would have chosen that!”

His voice withered, he cried and screamed without anyone to hear. From his heart, his soul, he screamed.

“Why!? Someone answer me!”

†

**The young man that the goddess had chosen had a fiancé. She was a beautiful young girl.**

**She had the reputation of being the most beautiful and smartest princess in the country.**

**The civilians, the girl and the young man—the hero who had saved her, the young man that was a hero was blessed to marry her. They were looking forward to it. Until the goddess picked the young man.**

**The nobles and the civilians all grieved.**

**However, it was something that couldn't be helped.**

**After all, it was decided by the goddess. Things decided by the goddess were absolute.**

Besides the young man was a real hero.

He had accepted his destiny without a word. There was only one path, and that road was considered the best after all.

He only had one regret, it was the young girl that he had been promised marriage to, but there was nothing that he could do so the young man gave up. He could only give it up.

Then, on the day they were to separate.

The last day for the young man and his fiancé.

She said this with a smile. “The importance of your role, I know more than anyone else. That’s why, please be relieved and fulfill your duty.”

The young man had worried about leaving the young girl more than anyone else, but those feelings were pretty much relieved by those words. She will most likely find another man and be happy—the young man was completely relieved, and could now think of welcoming the fated day.

However, the girl made a big lie.

The young man was outstanding.

The girl as well, did not intend to be an easy woman who did nothing by his side.

Then, she made an appeal.

She said this to the goddess.

“Please, make me his replacement. Make me his replacement and take me instead.”

†

“——Have you just about settled down?”

There was a voice. There was a voice on this island with no one on it, where he was supposed to be completely alone.

Yuuki turned towards the voice.

“...”

He bit his lip. He glared at that person.

“Have you already finished your work in bullying the earth, or so I asked. Did you not hear? Were you shocked so much that you can’t hear?”

Maid clothes.

The same unchanging smile and the strict behavior.

It was Chiyo-san.

“...Why are you here?”

“Was it within your prediction?”

Chiyo-san noted lightly.

“You don’t seem that surprised after seeing my face. Did you make some level of assumption beforehand already?”

“...Yeah, well, it isn’t like I didn’t think about this at all.”

He answered as he continued to glare at her.

“If I had to say, I did think of it. I did prepare a lot to get here, but escaping there was too easy.”

But, still. He had confirmed beforehand that no one had landed on this island. Likewise, if a ship was to come, a notification should have arrived. In addition, there was only one beach on this island suitable for landing. In other words, as long as he was close to this beach, he would be able to grasp all the boats that came close.

Despite that, Chiyo was here alone. Moreover, she was in her maid clothes—as if this was just an extension of the work that she was in charge of in the goddess’s home.

So this is the Tsukumo organization, Yuuki clicked his tongue. They were people that you couldn't understand their scale, from when they existed, and the types of power they held. As expected from a group that had made his mother and father nod without them being able to move even their hands and legs.

Of course.

This was not within the human realm.

"...What are you, exactly—"

"Now, let's get into the main problem."

Chiyo-san cutoff him off and ignored his question.

"As you can see, my mistress has died. You took her out and did the impossible, and the little remaining life she had disappeared in an instant. Unfortunately, she died without any help. She can't be revived. There is only one method left."

"..."

"From the looks of it, it seems you have a slight understanding."

He ground his teeth quietly, as Chiyo-san calmly points out.

"And it seems that you have recalled almost everything. If that's the case, this will be fast. Please make a decision. Yes or no, pick whichever one you like. Everything is now left to you alone."

"..."

I don't understand anything you are saying—it wasn't like that.

It was just as she pointed out. He had a light understanding. It was just as she said. He really did remember. The truth was already in reach of his outstretched hands.

"Chiyo-san"

"What is it?"

“You said this right. “This world will soon be destroyed”.”

“Yes, I did say that.”

“Sekai, Kanaruzawa Sekai, has died. But as you can see, the world has not been destroyed. It’s still very much alive. What does this mean?”

She had said at the time. This world will be destroyed soon. And that it would disappear in an instant without a trace. Because of that, Yuuki understood that Kanaruzawa Sekai was nearing death.

Of course. If she, who was protecting the world were to disappear, there would be no one else protecting the world. It wouldn’t be weird if the world disappeared. That’s why, Yuuki took her and ran. For the small amount of time left, she could at least live as a human. He had sacrificed everything in order to prepare for this.

This is the result.

Sekai was dead, and the world was still alive. This is weird. The logic didn’t match. There’s something wrong.

“Yeah, it will be destroyed.”

She nodded.

“The moment when u make a decision, this world will probably disappear without a trace. Without anyone knowing, without any warning—that’s rule that the goddess has made. It isn’t something suspicious, nor is it a temporary thing it is something a real goddess had decided as a rule.”

“...”

“Please remember and see. The things that happened before you met with my mistress three months ago.”

“...”

“The time when you proposed to my mistress. Did you think it was just a coincidence that marriage came to your mouth? She looked pretty to the eyes, so you were taken by the mood? Really? Something’s weird, did you not have any doubts like that?”

“ .. ”

“It is quite easy. You had just unconsciously repeated it. Repeating without failing the same fate that you had brought upon yourself.”

**The young girls proposal gave a blow to the goddess.**

**The goddess was largely omniscient and omnipotent, but sometimes there were things that she did not understand. The young girl’s proposal was one of those things.**

**Take me instead of my fiancé, I will shoulder everything myself!**

**To the goddess, this proposal was outside her expectations. This is why humans are interesting—and so the goddess accepted the young girl’s proposal.**

**However, at that time, and idea fell upon the goddess.**

**She noticed that there was a way to make this situation even more interesting.**

**The goddess said to the young man from before, the man who was honored by the civilians—normally, the story would have ended here. You’re fiancé would from now on, without the help of anyone else put the world on her back and with that sacrifice, harmony would be maintained.**

**As long as the human world continued to exist forever, this is how it will be.**

**Happily, ever after.**

**Applaud.**

**—That’s why, young man.**

**Don’t you think leaving it at just that is boring?**

**Is it really okay for you to have the woman you love sacrifice herself for you, with you only being able to point and watch?**

**—Very well.**

**Then, I'll give you a chance.**

**The two of you will from now on, with different appearances, meet, again and again.**

**From now on, for how many thousands and thousands of years, you will continue to meet and reach the same fate.**

**However, young man.**

**You will be given a limitless number of chances.**

**If you really have true intentions, show me how you change your fate.**

**With your own strength and methods, turn down the destiny brought about by a goddess.**

**Young man.**

**Would you like to play along with me?**

**...Ah, of course.**

**That's why I answered in this way.**

**You bastard.**

**But I still took on the provocation.**

**Bring it on.**

**I'll repeat this how many thousands and thousands of times, and show you that I can change this damn fate.**

**Don't underestimate humans, alright?**

**I'll definitely make you eat your words—I think I ended up saying something along those lines.**

**The goddess took on the fight.**

**She took it on in good humor.**

**Then, “that person” said.**

**The girl who was supposed to be tied with me—who had reversed this mad fate, that fool who had done something and replaced me said.**

**“Bye.”**

**“However, we will meet again.”**

**...That’s what she said.**

**It was such a fragile smile—however her eyes were those that believe in me. That’s what she said—**

**“Do you remember now? Who you are exactly.”**

**Chiyo-san asked Yuuki.**

**“Let me add on to it. First of all, the fate that you and my mistress are subject to, is of the form that falls into the story genre that concerns loops.”**

**Disregarding Yuuki’s moan from the sudden influx of memory, Chiyo-san continued.**

**“The fates that you and my mistress are subject to, are exceedingly similar, as they repeat over and over again. By doing this, the world can maintain its current appearance and continue to stand.”**

**He listened to her voice while barely maintaining his consciousness.**

**“As a result, you and my mistress both end up being reincarnated in many different forms, and relive it. However, your memory and my mistress’s memory are not allowed to remain. In addition, things cannot be reset without reaching a certain point. Without this, a proper loop would not be established, right?”**

Calmly, no coldly, she spoke. She had a tone that suggested that she was only conveying facts.

“This is the type of situation that you and my mistress are put into.”

She accepted with Yuuki’s glare with a smile.

““It’s like arriving at the last boss at an extremely low level, and although it’s unlikely I can ever beat it, there is no way I can because the save data is only allowed halfway to the boss”...well, it’s something like that I think.”

“ ... ”

“Once it’s become like that, nothing can be done. That is just how strictly the system specifications are. That’s why the only way to beat it is through some sort of unknown bug.”

“ ... ”

“As such, Yuuki-sama. There are two paths that you can choose. Wish for a miracle and continue this impossible game. Or completely give up on this impossible game.”

“ ... ”

“Do you understand?”

“ ... ”

Yuuki took a large breath. It wasn’t that he was losing himself to anger. If he thought about it. There was one best action in this situation.

“I have a few things I would like to ask.”

“What is it?”

“How many times has it been.”

“It’s been 10122 times already.”

Chiyo-san answered lightly.

“Since the goddess has established these rules, every time, my mistress reached her body’s limits, every time, you tried to save her, and every time you have reached some sort of frustrating end. The number of times that that has happened has reached 10122. This time would be 10123.”

“I see. It’s only that much.”

Yuuki took another large breath. He had mostly calmed down. He also finally organized his disorganized thoughts.

“So, I can still continue the game, right?”

“Yes, as long as you wish for it.”

“In other words, Sekai can live again?”

“Yes.”

Chiyo-san nodded nervously.

“However, the current causes and effects will be rewritten. You and my mistress. Will be the same people, yet not the same. In that sense, you can start the game back from zero. But beating the game is impossible. ”

“...Quite a shitty game this is.”

“Therefore, you have the right to choose.”

“Will I quit, or continue? That isn’t really a right to choose. After all, if I choose to quit the game will be over, right?”

“Isn’t that also a completely valid choice?”

“Please don’t joke with me.”

“Isn’t it a lot better than just repeating useless struggles over and over?”

“No, it won’t repeat again. It will never be bad like this again. That’s why, the next time it will end. For sure.”

“By the way, “last time”, you said the same thing.”

Yuuki scratched his head. There are certainly a lot of things that I don't remember, but I definitely remember saying that. The result of letting the person I love die.

“It's alright if you quit, you know?”

She asked with a smile.

“In fact, that's what I would recommend. In that way, things will end nice and cleanly. Don't you think that?”

“Let me ask this in return.”

Yuuki laughed again and said.

“Is there anyone who would quit here? Only a fool would quit here. So of course, I won't quit. It's still only been about 10000 times, right?”

“Well, I guess it's as you say.”

The maid accepted it with a sigh as Yuuki continued to chase further.

“There's one more thing I would like to ask.”

“What is it?”

“Are you the “goddess”, Chiyo-san?”

“Please don't joke.”

She laughed and shook her head.

This was the first time he saw her laugh. It wasn't that she was bad at it, nor was it a completely out of place laugh. There was obvious self-deprecation and self-indignation in the laugh.

“I am just “the lowest of the low”. I am just an existence that watches over you and my mistress, while managing and maintaining the rules of the game. Borrowing your words, I would just be called a bastard. A bitch who shouldn't be allowed to live or

breathe.”

“I see. I understand.”

Hearing that was enough. She isn’t an ally exactly. But neither is she an enemy.

If he had to say it, she would be a kindred spirit. A companion who wanted to hit the goddess who had such a bad interest, someone who was who was truly angry at the current situation—even if he didn’t know exactly who or what she was.

“With this, the game this time is over.”

She gave a bow and said declared.

“The 10123rd time ended with a bad end again. As of the current point, any of the causes and effects up to this point will be rewritten. I don’t know how it will be rewritten too—I do not have the authority for that after all. My role is only to spin the roulette at the appointed time to get random results.”

Time stopped.

Space distorted.

Everything became stagnant, fast forwarded at the same time, or rolled back. Everything lost meaning, or reversed itself. It was all rebuilt.

“This will be a short farewell. I wish you another good good cycle.”

After those words, the world changed.



---

**TL Note:**

1. A Honda motorcycle, considered the embodiment of a Universal Japanese motorcycle produced through the 1970s.



2. In Asian cultures, it is common for people to offer lots of food in prayers. Often times, in front of shrines, whether it's relatives or the gods, people will place lots of food in hopes that they will eat them. It's interesting in this context because Sekai is a god, and she is dying which makes this kind of imagery fit in both contexts.

# Epilogue



終章

—Thus, the world was rebuilt.

The young man that was a hero, and the girl that was his fiancé, could be said to have entered an infinite hell, as they took a step into their long long journey.

How it would end, no one knew.

Even the goddess who had set up the game did not know.

The girl that was his fiancé, accepted the fate that she had chosen herself, as she continued to protect the world alone, by sacrificing her body.

The young man that was a hero, changed into many different forms and reunited with his fiancé. However, the girl would always fall ill and with no way of seeing her through, he would always lament.

The number of stories that they had created together, had finally reached just over ten thousand.

From now on, what kinds of stories will the two of them create?

Will the two of them ever be able to live a peaceful and ordinary life.

Everything was left to fate and left alone.

After all, even the goddess couldn't see through to the end of this story.

Will it be a demon that comes out? Or will it be a snake?

If you're right, it's divination, if you're off, it's also divination.

Everyone, please have a look—

“...I had a dream like that.”

“I see. Fuun.”

March had ended and spring was at its height.

It was a new year, and a new school year.

They were in Murakumo Private High School third year class A's classroom.

Kirishima Yuuki was talking about the dream that he had last night.

“Man. It was such a long story.”

Leaning towards the wall by the window, Yuuki crossed his arms.

“It was a long story, and a masterpiece. It was honestly an amazing scenario. I cried so much as I was sleeping. I never thought that it would end like that, and by the time I woke up, my pillow was completely wet. Have you ever had a dream like that, Koiwai-san? No way, right?”

“Hmm, I wonder.”

The class representative, Koiwai Kurumi crossed her arms,

“To me. I think it's strange that a dream that you had over one night could be such a long story.”

“What? What do you mean?”

“I mean the story that you said, was definitely really moving but... in reality, the dream that you talked is a lot like dramas and animes. It's almost like the volume of the Taiga drama <sup>[1]</sup>. I really wonder if you can dream that up in one night.”

“Of course you can, right? It's a dream after all. Anything can happen in dreams.”

“In my thoughts”

Kurumi pointed her index finger,

“The dream that you just talked about, was not one of your dreams, but something else completely. That's what I think.”

“If it isn't a dream then what is it.”

“In other words, it's that. It's that, a “cool setting” that you've been warming up from childhood, that kind of thing?”

“...What?”

“I mean, is that wrong? A princess-like goddess who protects the world alone, and you go help this girl through some huge plan of yours. Isn't that a common story? It's a common daydream, right? Yup yup, it is it is. Boys always daydream about such things.”

Koku koku, Kurumi nods, satisfied with herself.

“Still, it's unexpected. Yuuki also daydreams about such fantasies. You are rich, the son to Kirishima Pharmaceuticals, and you have a brocon sister. If you think about it normally, that's already some pretty high specs, right? From other people's perspective, it's already enough of a fantasy like setting.”

“Is having a brocon little sister really something you can count into having more status...?”

“It isn't something to be troubled by. It's to the point where anyone would be envious of that position. Or at least, that's what I think. Still Yuuki, there's still a lot of things I don't know about you. Surely, you've had it tough for a lot of things that I don't know about.”

Somehow, it seems a misunderstanding was made.

But it's fine, Yuuki thought.

Although he spoke, he wasn't expecting to gain any empathy. Who could possibly empathize with him anyways? It was so hopeless, yet realistic—his dream where he had felt someone's body temperature disappear within his hands, how could he convey it so that someone could understand?

(Well, it can't be helped.)

Yuuki also accepted it. It was something you wouldn't understand unless you experienced it. Sharing their feelings would be impossible just from listening to the story. Rather, he should be thanking her. She had listened until the end of his long ramblings about his dream.

“By the way, Yuuki-kun.”

Kurumi gave off a smile. Then she struck out and pointed her finger at him.

“You brought them again didn’t you.”

“What?”

“The chocolate cigarettes. You brought them again.”

She once again smiled. Then she yelled into his ears.

“You liaaaaaaaaaaaaar!”

His eardrums felt like they would break. The rest of the people in the classroom turned to look at them, but quickly returned to their own conversations.

“Even if god looks past this, I can’t possibly let this go! Clearly coming from your body is the sweet smell of cacao and sugar!”

“Idiot. Your voice is too loud.”

Flustered, he tried to cover Kurumi’s mouth. Bringing sweets into the school was strictly prohibited.

“Please speak a little bit more quietly. Or else everyone will misunderstand.”

“Regardless of any of that,”

She sounded angry, but at least she her voice was quieter,

“It’s true though that you brought sweets though, right? Yuuki-kun, you’re a class representative right? If you do something like this, then you can’t really set an example for everyone else, right?”

“Well, that’s true but...”

Yuuki tried to make an excuse.

“Without it, my mouth feels somewhat lonely. It’s like I can’t seem to calm down.”

“Do you still feel like you want to smoke some tobacco?”

Kurumi was shocked,

“Didn’t you already quit during middle school? I kept telling you to stop after all.”

“Well, that’s true but...”

“Me! I kept telling you! Me!”

“Why did you repeat it again?”

Yuuki glared at her,

“Besides, it’s not tobacco but cigars, you know? The ones that I smoked that is. Don’t mistaken that, okay? It’s completely different after all.”

“They’re the same aren’t they?”

“Nono. Tobacco and cigars are completely different. ”

“It doesn’t maaattteeeerrrrrrrrr!”

She yelled again.

The rest of the people in the classroom turned to look at them, but quickly returned to their own conversations. Kurumi was indignant,

“Tobacco and cigars are the same thing, right!? The ingredients are all the same, right!? It’s like how udon and soumen are basically the same!? It’s no different from that!”

“...Isn’t there something wrong with saying that? You need to apologize to some people for that, you know?”

“Anyways, Yuuki-kun.”

Hafuu~, she let out a breath.

“I’ve already told you this many times but, it’s not good for a high schooler to be smoking cigars. You aren’t some old uncle after all. You also aren’t some mafia boss after all.”

“No, I told you that I quit already.”

“If you still want to smoke, I can understand it. I get it because there are a lot of other people who do that as well, but, cigars, you know... I’ve going to keep saying it, but cigars...”

“...There’s no need to be so shocked by that, is there?”

“No. I’m completely amazed. A young person who doesn’t know about the what’s sweet or sour with a cigar. It completely doesn’t match~. It doesn’t match at all~.”

Hafuu~, she took another deep breath,

“Besides, Yuuki-kun. Do cigars taste good? Do you smoke because it’s tasty?”

“No. Cigars are disgusting.”

“That makes me even more frustrated! Why do you smoke it if it tastes bad!?”

Kurumi held her head. Then with another, hafuuuu~, she took another breath.

“Anyways. Since you already stopped smoking, stop it with the chocolate cigarettes as well. It seems so childish.”

“Well. Yeah. But...”

“What?”

“I was barely able to quit smoking cigars, so I don’t know about chocolate cigarettes. It feels like I almost can’t stop it.”

“Ugh! What’s with that!”

Kurumi stamped her feet in frustration.

“Are you a child! You are one! Do you need something like Linus’s blanket?!<sup>[2]</sup> Can you not go one without a pacifier!”

“Your voice is too loud.”

“Anyways, I,”

Kurumi hit the table to emphasize her words.

“As a student representative! As a friend that’s known you for a long time! I will make you quit! Prepare yourself!”

“Alright alright. I understand.”

Anyways, he wanted to calm her down.

In order to do that, he changed the topic.

“More importantly, Koiwai-san, why are you so energetic.”

“Hmm? Did you not hear, Yuuki-kun?”

Kurumi made a look of surprise. She returned to her normal voice,

“I see. That’s why you’re normal. No wonder.”

What is she talking about? Before he was able to ask that, the door to the classroom opened.

“Hey, everyone in their seats,” the homeroom teacher hit the board with the seating arrangement as she came in.

All the classmates quickly made their way back to their seats and sat down. The class didn’t change, but the classroom did. As such, the initial seating arrangement was in alphabetical order. Yuuki was at a seat by the window.

“Well then, homeroom is starting now. There hasn’t been much change, but I would like to ask for your best regards this year as well. It’s fine to be relaxed. It’s just that we have a new member to for the class.”

She shrugged her shoulders and looked towards the hallway,

“You guys already heard about it, right? I’ll introduce you guys to the new person. Heeey. Don’t hide and come in.”

Zawa zawa.

Hiso hiso.

Everyone in the class whispered to each other. They had a look of expectations and curiosity. It was an air that was hungry for new stimulus. When he looked towards Kurumi who was sitting in the back, she returned him a meaningful wink.

What?

What is planning on starting?

While he was perplexed, the air changed. The classroom suddenly became quiet. It was like the moment you realize that what you were touching was really a world-class jewel instead of a marble like you thought it was. The current atmosphere was like that.

What?

What is happening?

What is this feeling?

Yuuki also moved his eyes towards where his other classmates were looking. Then, he gulped. It was one moment. There was a jewel. It was beyond the open door of the classroom. There, the girl stood. She was like a frightened fairy looking out through a hole.

First, was her silver hair. Then, her red eyes. Her white porcelain skin harmonizing with her own beauty. And more than anything, the feeling that oozed out of her body was that of an otherworldly nature.

Everyone was overwhelmed.

He thought that the homeroom teacher who was completely calm during this time, was a really amazing person. Or maybe, the years were eating away at her sense of aesthetics? Standing next to such an existence, does that really not make you feel anything? Is it okay for such a thing to be possible? It was clear that in the eyes of everyone in the classroom, the appearance of the girl seemed like some sort of goddess.

“Anyways, this is the transfer student.”

The homeroom teacher didn't change her tension as she spoke. In fact, her face seemed a little sleepy.

"Well then. You, give your introduction."

"Y-yes."

After replying, the jewel gave a nod. That voice did not betray the visual impression at all. It was a beautiful voice, like a ringing bell.

"K-k-kanaruzawa Sekai. Please take care of me...!"

It was most likely said with ever everything she had, and with an awkward smile. She had made such a simple self-introduction, that it scattered the splendor of the still stunned classroom.

†

Now, let the romantic comedy begin.

Between a goddess and a human...

Or between a hero and his lover...

Repeatedly being tied together, repeatedly being torn apart...

A romantic comedy that no one can complain about.

---

### **TL Note:**

1. This I believe is a reference to a historical fiction television drama broadcasted by NHK. I'm assuming their known for long dramatic shows.
2. This is a reference to Linus, from Charlie Brown, who can't go anywhere without his blanket. Specifically, the can't let go of his blanket part. A "safety blanket" so to speak.

---

## Quick note about names:

In this chapter and beyond, the author changes the way first names are written in the story. The first volume had names written in Katakana, which means they were written out with syllables and each character had no individual meaning. From now on, the character names for Kurumi, Yuuki, Sekai, and Haruko, are all written in Kanji, or some might say Chinese characters, which means each individual name has some sort of image to it. I'll be giving them below with their English translated, Katakana, and the Kanji, and a short explanation of the Kanji:

Yuuki => ユウキ => 優樹:

The characters for Yuuki are excellent and tree.

Kurumi => クルミ => 来海:

The characters for Kurumi are coming and sea.

Sekai => セカイ => 世界:

Unsurprisingly, the characters for Sekai when put together literally mean the world.

Haruko => ハルコ => 春子:

The characters for Haruko mean spring and child.

# Afterword

Suzuki Daichi here.

I bring to you a new work *Monku Tsukeyou ga Nai Rabukome*.

*Monrabu* for short. Nice to meet you.

Also, this is the first time I have written a manuscript for Shueisha. In that sense as well, nice to meet everyone.

†

In making this piece, I had gone with concept of, *what would be the best romantic comedy*, and as a result, I ended up with something I could never even imagine. It would be great if you can enjoy it even a little bit.

Prior to this release, the web comic site, *Tonari no Young Jump*, the manga for *Monrabu* also started its serialization. In charge of the drawing is the illustrator, Abara Heiki (I'm very much indebted to him!).

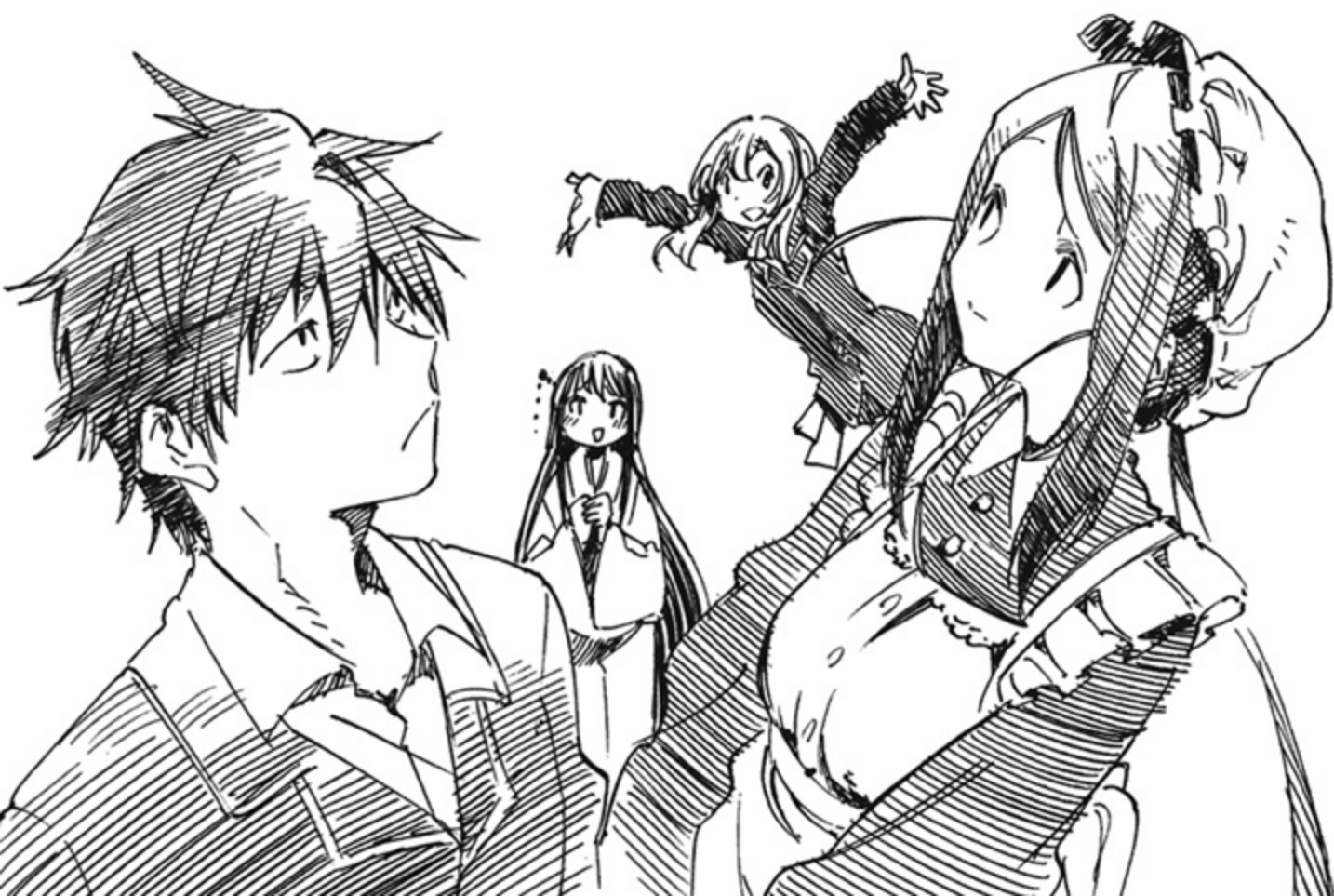
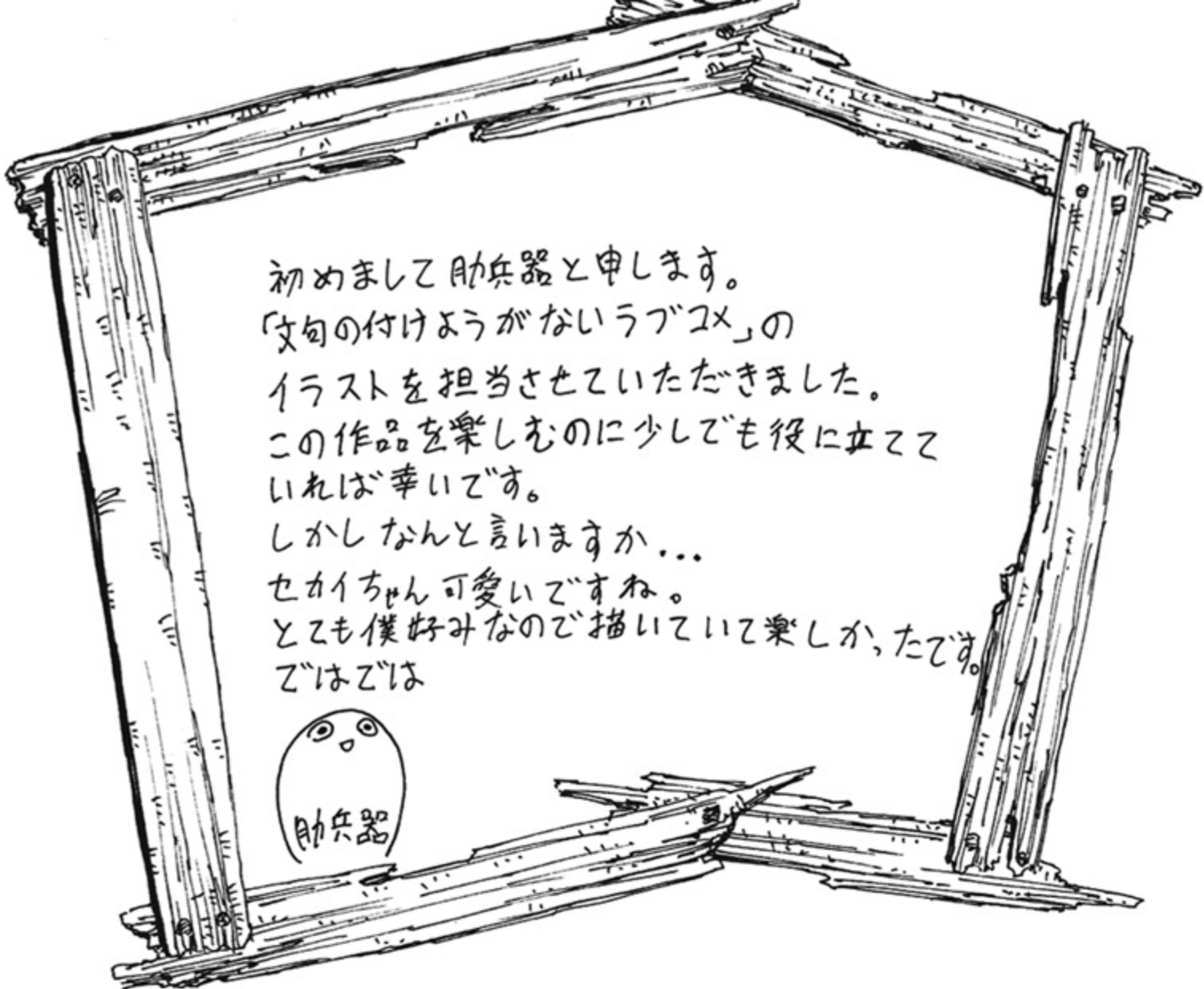
I don't believe it loses to the original work. Also, since it delivers a story with a little bit of a different flavor to it when compared to the original, I invite you to take a look at that as well. The original characters from the original work will appear in the manga as is.

†

That will be the end of this afterword. Let's meet again in the second volume.

One day in October, Suzuki Daichi







PDF by: traitorAIZEN